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Tuyotuki Islands

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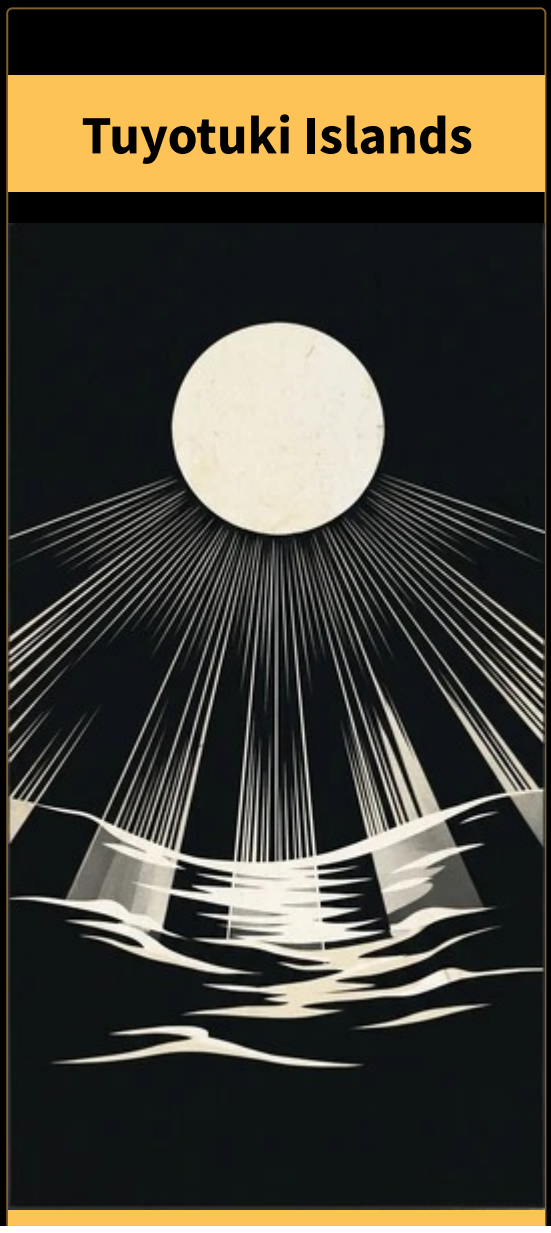

Tsuyoi Tsuki no Shotō (強い月の諸島), literally *Archipelago/Islands of the Strong Moon* in their native language, and popularly known throughout the rest of the world as the **Tuyotuki Islands** or the **Tuyotukian Empire**, are a group of islands located in the southern reaches of the eastern coast of the Old Continent.

Throughout their history, the islands gave rise to two of the largest empires in the known world: the First Tuyotukian Empire and the Second Tuyotukian Empire.

In terms of territorial extent, both were surpassed only by the Haaki Empire, which dominated much of the central and eastern regions of the Old Continent, and the Nilfgaardian Empire on the western coast.

By the time of the colonization of the Western Continent, beginning in the 1380s After the Resurrection, the Second

General information	
Variation(s)	Tsuyoi Tsuki no Shotō Tuyotuki Islands Tuyotukian Empire
Status	Empire
Ruler	Emperor
Societal information	
Official Language	Idaisa no gengo
Demonym	Tuyotukian Tuyotukan
Religion	Tuyotukian Religion

Tuyotukian Empire had become one of the major non-Western colonial powers, alongside Zangvebar in the south.

In the Tuyotukian case, its principal colonial possession was Shiroi Tsuki (白い月), literally *White Moon*, better known as Shirotuki, located on the western coast of the Western Continent.

Shirotuki lay far from the colonial conflicts involving the other major powers. Tuyotukian territory was separated from the Nordling territories of the Confederation of Colonies of Fabiola by a small inland sea known as the Lunar Sea, leaving the Tuyotukian colonial sphere comparatively isolated from their disputes.

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Etymology

The name *Tsuyoi Tsuki no Shotō* derives from *Tsuyoi Tsuki no Otoko* (強い月の男), the deity worshipped in the Tuyotukian religion.

The commonly used name Tuyotuki, meanwhile, originated as a foreign corruption of the deity's name and, by extension, of the native name of the archipelago.

Demonym

Two principal demonyms are used for the inhabitants of the Tuyotuki Islands, depending on the ethnic groups being referenced: Tuyotukian and Tuyotukan.

Tuyotukian primarily refers to the Tsukierabi and ethnic groups related to or descended from them. However, in many contexts it can also function as an ethnically neutral demonym encompassing the inhabitants of the Tuyotuki Islands as a whole, regardless of ancestry.

Tuyotukan, by contrast, is specifically applied to the Sajibito and ethnic groups related to or descended from them. Unlike Tuyotukian, it is not normally employed as a general demonym for the entire population of the islands.

History

Very Ancient Times

In very ancient times, the islands emerged, like most islands, through volcanic processes. In their case, they originally formed a single island which, as the sea penetrated too deeply into different parts of the landmass, combined with a rise in sea level, eventually broke apart into the different islands that exist today.

Ancient Times

According to Shinryū, the original inhabitants of the islands were neither dragons, despite what some Tuyotukian scholars believe, nor the samebitos themselves, but rather the ancestors of the latter.

According to the dragon, these beings began as aquatic creatures before eventually emerging onto land, only to later return to an aquatic existence, while retaining the ability to venture onto the surface when necessary.

In those ancient times, they are believed to have maintained a number of city-states which, as the ecology of the islands developed, eventually collapsed, forcing them to return to the sea.

Some hills throughout the islands are therefore believed—although not even Shinryū can say so with certainty—to actually be those ancient cities, now hidden beneath the landscape. However, no one has ever dared to clear their vegetation to determine whether this is truly the case.

The Age of Dragons

Following the collapse of the city-states of the ancestors of the samebitos, dragons arrived from what is now Bia Thin. Once again, however, these were neither tatsu nor golden dragons, but rather the common ancestor of both.

Despite what clichés might suggest, they established no civilization—at least, nothing that other species would understand as civilization, not even the radically ecocentric dryads of Brokilon. This was due both to their mentality and to their profoundly alien nature.

Their arrival on the islands was forced not by persecution of the kind that would nearly drive chromatic and non-chromatic dragons to extinction in the distant age following humanity's arrival in the world, but by an unknown disease. The outbreak forced healthy individuals to seek an isolated refuge, which they eventually found in the Tuyotuki Islands.

Over an immeasurable span of time, isolation caused them to cease being whatever they had once been and gradually evolve into the tatsu. Despite their extraordinarily long lifespans, many died as a result of natural phenomena, wars among themselves, and countless other causes. Their offspring, and the offspring of those descendants, gradually changed within this isolated environment until they became what would later be known as eastern dragons.

Shinryū, the most famous tatsu

Once the tatsu had emerged as a distinct species, they came to regard the islands as a limitation. Fearing that they might eventually destroy themselves in another war like those fought by their ancestors, they chose to expand beyond the archipelago. This led to their presence across several parts of the eastern coast—including, in a sense, a return to Bia Thin—and left only a small population behind on the islands. Some of these individuals survived into modern times, among them Shinryū.

Because their civilization was so fundamentally different from what other species understand by the term that it left no recognizable archaeological remains, knowledge of this period comes primarily from two sources: the testimony of the tatsu themselves, and certain geographical features that could not have originated through either natural or magical processes—the latter meaning phenomena caused by the presence of a Ley Line.

These features are believed either to have resulted from conflicts among the

dragons or, if the tatsu truly did create things analogous to those of other civilizations, to have once formed parts of buildings, monuments, or similar structures. According to Shinryū himself, however, their concepts of a building, monument, and related constructions were so utterly removed from those of other species that even the kodamas—the distant relatives of the dryads, all of whom are male, who arrived after the dragons and whose mentality is itself difficult for humans to comprehend—found them incomprehensible.

The Arrival of the Kodamas

Following the great migration of the dragons, the kodamas arrived on the islands. Their place of origin is completely unknown. Fabio Sachs theorized that they came from the western coast.

However, this theory is probably incorrect, as it appears to have been influenced by his own biases. Evidence instead suggests another possibility. Similarities between what the Tuyotukians recorded during their few non-hostile encounters with the kodamas, together with comparable information gathered by the Biathinians from Mendari—their state in Bia Thin—point toward a different origin. Meanwhile, the hostility of the dryads toward humans leaves the question of their presence on the western coast largely unresolved.

The most likely hypothesis is that the kodamas migrated from a vast green region that once covered part of the western coast and the southern Korath—the latter being considered the more probable location. Desertification may have driven them to undertake a long migration toward what would later become Mendari.

From there, a colonizing expedition appears to have reached the Tuyotuki Islands, given that Mendari itself continued to exist. This opens the door to an extreme but reasonably plausible possibility which, due to the very limited contact between humans and kodamas, remains unconfirmed: the kodamas who settled in the Tuyotuki Islands may have been exiles from Mendari. Not because they were considered wicked, but perhaps precisely the opposite. This hypothesis is based on the extreme aggression displayed by the kodamas of Mendari toward non-kodamas.

In the Tuyotuki Islands, the kodamas established what, in human terms, could be understood as something between a proto-state and a state on each of the islands they reached, as they did not settle throughout the entire archipelago.

Over time, much like Mendari, these societies gradually developed into theocracies. In the islands, however, their religion centered on the worship of dragons. These theocracies prospered for a time, but eventually collapsed. Unlike previous civilizations of the islands, their downfall was caused neither by ecological change nor by migration. Instead, some of the eastern dragons who had remained in the archipelago gradually became corrupted by the worship directed toward them. Before long, their growing abuses brought the kodama theocracies to ruin.

The surviving kodamas consequently retreated into a tribal way of life out of fear of dragons. Their former place within the islands was eventually occupied by the imori (守宮), a subspecies of vran—similar to vran warriors—with an appearance vaguely reminiscent of salamanders or geckos. The imori would establish a civilization much closer to what species such as humans or elves would recognize as civilization.

The Imori Empire

Little is known about the imori beyond the islands. It is known that they possessed an empire comparable to those established by other vran peoples during their golden age, such as the vrans of Núchtetl in Nayar, and that it was probably even larger than theirs, but little else is known.

At some point during the empire's expansion, the imori reached the Tuyotuki Islands and did what empires typically do: they founded colonies that eventually developed into cities, built roads, established governments, erected monuments, and created other forms of infrastructure.

Little of this remains today, however, as subsequent waves of non-humans arrived on the islands and either built over what the imori had created or destroyed their structures in order to reuse the materials.

Some time later, a major conflict erupted within the empire. According to Shinryū, it was a war fought for the independence of the imori of the Tuyotuki Islands, although even he cannot confirm this with certainty, as he was young by draconid standards at the time and his memories of that period have become hazy. What he does remember with certainty is that the dragons participated in the conflict, pursuing interests of their own as the corruption among them continued to grow. With the dragons' assistance, the island imori emerged victorious.

Only to then be enslaved by those very dragons. This enslavement served no practical purpose. It was carried out purely out of cruelty and for entertainment.

It was at this point that Shinryū chose to enter a deep sleep for the first time, within what would gradually become the inner lake of the Usu volcano. He refused to involve himself in what was happening because it went against his values, but also because he was only one dragon against many. At his age at the time, he could do nothing against dragons far older and more powerful than himself.

Eventually, the dragons grew bored and released the imori. The latter, however, would never recover their former glory, ultimately sharing the fate of the kodamas.

The Sapience of the Nekomata

Following the decline of the imori and the kodamas, the cats that had inhabited the islands since shortly after their formation would eventually solve a mystery that, centuries later, would trouble Nordling mages on the western coast: apart from dragons, cats are the only creatures known to absorb magical energy, yet no one knows what they do with it.

As ecological pressures on the islands forced these cats to make use of that energy in order to obtain food and survive, the trait gradually developed further. Over the course of successive eras, this eventually led to the development of the double tail that would earn them the name *forked cats*, as well as sapience, ultimately giving rise to the ancestors of modern nekomata.

They were not yet capable of assuming human form, however. Firstly, they had no model upon which to base such a transformation. Secondly, both their magical development and their ability to manipulate magic remained primitive, as ley lines had not yet acquired their semi-physical state.

Fortunately for the nekomata, they escaped the abuses of the dragons, who regarded them as insignificant, ugly, and stupid. At least, this is how Shinryū described the opinions expressed by his fellow dragons when he awakened following the arrival of the elves.

The elves, unlike the peoples who had preceded them, possessed considerable mastery of magic. Since the tatsu depended heavily upon magical energy simply to remain alive, the two peoples developed a symbiotic relationship, despite the

dragons once again becoming objects of worship.

Their elven worshippers guided the tatsu toward powerful places of magic that were difficult for the dragons to reach because of their immense size, allowing their bodies to continue functioning properly. In exchange, the tatsu, with their enormous elemental power, assisted the elves in numerous matters throughout the islands.

As for the nekomata, it was with the arrival of the elves that their ability to shapeshift would eventually emerge. In doing so, they became one of the earliest antherions in the world—if not the very first.

The Arrival of the Elves

The elves arrived in the islands, as they did in many other regions of the world, during the Age of Migration. However, the Aen Hagde were not the first elves to reach the Tuyotuki Islands. That distinction belonged to the Aen Taoide, the *People of the Tide*, also known as the sea elves.

Artistic depiction of an Aen Hagde woman

The Aen Taoide established a number of trading posts throughout the islands, seeking to obtain whatever products could be offered by whoever inhabited them at the time. These outposts proved short-lived, however. After coming into contact with the kodamas and imori, the Aen Taoide concluded that the islands had little that interested them and subsequently abandoned their settlements.

This sudden withdrawal would eventually have unexpected consequences. One day, while trading with their Aen Hagde cousins who inhabited several coastal kingdoms, the Aen Taoide casually mentioned a group of islands to the south which, in their opinion, were not worth visiting.

Rather than discouraging them, this sparked the curiosity of the Aen Hagde. Since at the time, the Aen Hagde were undergoing a period of expansion during which they would colonize much of the southern Far East. Eventually, they organized a colonial expedition to determine whether the islands truly were as unworthy of attention as their Aen Taoide cousins had claimed.

Thus began the arrival of the Aen Hagde in the Tuyotuki Islands—and, with them, the permanent elven settlement of the archipelago.

a n

The Rise of the Tengu

At approximately the same time as the elves arrived in the islands, the tengu—the often incorrectly named "*bird-men*"—began to establish their own civilization. After countless generations evolving from corvid ancestors, they eventually left their former tribal existence behind. During this process, their increasingly advanced intelligence ultimately developed into full sapience.

With it came an understanding of the tyrannical dominance exercised by the tatsu over the islands—and, more importantly, the realization that the dragons possessed an enormous weakness: their dependence on magic to survive and sustain their massive bodies. Having discovered both the existence of dimeritium, the anti-magical metal, and the art of metallurgy, the tengu armed themselves with primitive weapons and rose against the dragons.

Thus began the War of the Heavens. The war was ultimately won by the tengu, largely due to the arrogance of the dragons themselves. As the conflict progressed, the tengu gained experience and developed increasingly numerous and sophisticated weapons made from dimeritium.

Eventually, the tatsu were defeated. Thus, at least within the Tuyotuki Islands, the eastern dragons ultimately came to share the fate that had befallen their distant relatives long before them.

The Great Peace

The remaining tatsu survived only thanks to the elves. Having only recently arrived in the islands and recognizing the enormous elemental potential of the eastern dragons, the Aen Hagde decided to intervene on their behalf and prevent their extinction without spilling a single drop of blood.

The leader of the Hagde expedition and future king of their people in the Tuyotuki Islands, Adym aef Gorya aep Volur, managed to convince the Supreme Observer of the tengu, Samwî-Sawxí O'xcho'y'a Yaxku Zåąâ du'Lømī, commonly known simply as Yaxku, that all of their peoples could

A te n g u o b s e rv in g fr o m a di st a n c e, t h e te n g u s a r e o n e of t h e m

coexist peacefully. Adym promised that the elves would keep the surviving dragons under control.

Due to Hagde philosophy, however, this supposed control would eventually develop into a symbiotic relationship which, to outsiders, often appeared to be a form of dragon worship.

This agreement also resulted in the first major territorial division of the archipelago, one that would, centuries later, contribute to the emergence of the various kingdoms that existed before the arrival of the human Tsukierabi. In order to prevent incidents that could escalate into further wars, the territory was divided between the two dominant peoples: seven islands were assigned to the tengu and seven to the elves. Both quickly established control over their respective territories. The elves succeeded largely through their mastery of magic and their pacifist philosophy, while the tengu benefited from their ability to fly and their exceptional intelligence.

Following the division, the kodamas and imori began to recover a greater degree of civilization. The elves chose to integrate the populations living within their islands into Hagde society, as their knowledge of the archipelago was invaluable to the prosperity of the newly established elven civilization. Later, witnessing the benefits offered by this increasingly harmonious society, the nekomata also chose to join it.

This period of multispecies social harmony would eventually become a distant precursor to the Hyakki Yagyō, which would emerge much later, following the conquest of the islands by the human Tsukierabi.

It was during this period that Shinryū awakened once again. Seeing that his fellow dragons, despite the tragedy they had suffered, had finally been humbled by their defeat, he chose to remain awake and accept the new order. Shinryū eventually became the foremost dragon within this new system and served as the right hand of successive Hagde kings.

The Great Peace would endure until the First Conjunction of the Spheres shattered the balance. The arrival of monsters and new sapient beings caused widespread social collapse across both Hagde and tengu territories, breaking the existing order and fragmenting the Tuyotuki Islands into numerous independent states.

any non-human races unique to this part of the world

The First Conjunction of the Spheres (230s B.R.)

The arrival of the First Conjunction of the Spheres marked the end of the Great Peace.

This was not primarily due to the monsters that arrived during the event. Peoples such as the imori, descendants of what had once been likely a highly militarized civilization, would likely have been capable of containing many of them. Instead, the Tuyotuki Islands became a major concentration point for the arrival of numerous sapient species from other spheres.

The sudden appearance of so many peoples eventually overwhelmed the political and social structures of the two great powers that dominated the archipelago. Not even beings as ancient and knowledgeable as the dragons knew how to properly respond to the situation.

The newcomers were numerous and spoke languages completely incomprehensible to the inhabitants of the islands. Their cultures were equally unfamiliar and, in many cases, the newly arrived peoples were frightened, confused and entirely unaware of where they were. Many therefore reacted defensively to their unknown surroundings.

Attempts by the inhabitants of the islands to establish contact and provide assistance repeatedly failed due to these linguistic and cultural barriers. Misunderstandings escalated into confrontations, which in turn produced further fear and hostility on both sides, accelerating the collapse of the existing order.

In an attempt to prevent this, Shinryū flew toward what is today Bia Thin seeking the assistance of other dragons. He believed that only a sufficiently large number of them possessed the power necessary to maintain order throughout the islands until Hagde and tengu society could reorganize itself. The remaining dragons stayed behind and attempted to contain the growing chaos.

During his journey in search of aid, Shinryū inadvertently came into contact with the Buêrêng humans, ancestors of many of the ethnic groups inhabiting modern Bia Thin. They came to worship him and would eventually know him as Shenlong.

Unfortunately, Shinryū failed to secure the assistance he sought. By the

Bia thi nia an art isti c re pre sen tat ion of a

time he finally returned to the Tuyotuki Islands, the world he had left behind had already changed considerably. The vacuum left by the collapse of Hagde and tengu power had been filled by other non-human peoples—and by the humans who would later become known as the Sajibito.

t a ts u fr o m t h a t ti m e

The Appearance of the Sajibito (200s B.R.)

"*Putnam has just received a sword of rather curious design—banyal, or something like that—which reminds me of Sajibito artwork I saw in the Tuyotuki Islands. There is probably some connection, however distant. And speaking of connections, I'm sure Put will write about it very seriously in his journal without mentioning that it was a gift from the lover he found here in Sabana. And to think he was sad when we departed eastward because he had to leave behind the tavernkeeper he had been seeing. Anyway... I think I'd better stop writing.*"
—Recorded in Father's Diaries I by Canata Sachs, daughter of Fabio Sachs and editor of the work, 1360 edition

Contrary to what might be assumed, the Sajibito did not arrive in the Tuyotuki Islands during the First Conjunction of the Spheres itself. Instead, they appeared sometime afterward, much like another human population would do centuries later.

Their original homeland remains unknown. Comparative studies have established, however, that they did not originate in Bia Thin.

During the return journey of the Far East Expedition, Fabio Sachs developed a theory after the group stopped at the Nilfgaardian colony of Sabana, in the Sundalaic Islands. Sachs proposed that the Sajibito might originally have come from the islands of Anlúmapal. The hypothesis remains highly uncertain. Sachs never visited Anlúmapal himself, and the islands possess an almost semi-mythical status throughout much of the eastern coast. Only a limited number of artifacts provide evidence for their possible existence, among them a banyal received by Putnam Pitch as a gift while the expedition stayed in Sabana.

Sachs nevertheless considered an Anlúmapalian origin plausible because certain ocean currents reaching the Tuyotuki Islands could have facilitated navigation between the two regions. He further theorized that the migration may have been caused by monsters that had arrived in Anlúmapal following the First

Conjunction. What is known with greater certainty is that, upon reaching the Tuyotuki Islands, the Sajibito established themselves across several of the smaller islands and only one of the four principal islands: Tawalisi.

The Second Great Peace (100s B.R. – 760s A.R.)

"*It wasn't perfect, not by any means, but it was reasonably functional.*"
—Shinryū on the Second Great Peace

Following the chaos unleashed by the First Conjunction of the Spheres, the Tuyotuki Islands eventually entered a period that later historians would call the Second Great Peace.

Certain species emerged as the dominant political forces from the centuries of instability and established a series of multi-species states throughout the archipelago. Each of these states was generally led by whichever species had emerged victorious in that particular territory. Depending on the island, several different states could coexist. This was particularly common on the largest islands, where their size allowed multiple political entities to develop independently.

The most notable example was that of the Sajibito humans, who established a number of island kingdoms under human leadership. These societies, however, did not yet possess the forms of discrimination that would characterize later Tuyotukian history. Survival after the upheavals of the Conjunction had made cooperation indispensable, and each species came to perform functions considered essential to the survival and prosperity of the wider community.

Among the Sajibito-led states, humans primarily occupied the role of political leadership. In this sense, some of these societies could loosely be described as communist, although this should not be confused with the kind of centrally planned economic organization associated with peoples such as the dwarves of Mahakam.

Paradoxical as the expression may initially sound, a more appropriate description might be a form of monarchical communism: societies organized around communal interdependence and functional contribution while retaining monarchs or something close to it as political leaders.

During this period, Shinryū finally returned from Bia Thin. He found the islands profoundly different from those he had left behind, but also unexpectedly stable.

Rather than attempting to restore the old Hagde-Tengu order, he chose to remain and accept the new political reality.

Together with the few remaining dragons, Shinryū began acting as an intermediary between the various states of the archipelago, attempting to prevent disputes from escalating into open conflict.

Their mediation proved remarkably effective. It was this long period of relative coexistence and successful conflict prevention that would eventually give the era its historical name: the Second Great Peace.

Over the centuries, however, Shinryū's position as intermediary increasingly transformed him into an object of religious veneration. Combined with the worship he had already experienced in Bia Thin, centuries spent resolving disputes, and his prolonged exposure to both the best and worst behavior of the peoples of the islands—particularly humans—Shinryū eventually became exhausted by it all.

He withdrew once again into Mount Usu, whose crater by this period already contained an interior lake, and entered a prolonged sleep. He would remain there for centuries. Until the elf Hoseki awakened him.

The Tsukierabi Conquest and the Birth of Modern Tuyotuki (760s–790s A.R.)

At approximately the same time that the ancestors of the Nordlings were arriving in small numbers on the western coast from the frozen land of Vinland, located on the theorized lost continent of Kylfingland—not to be confused with Nyrvinland, the duchy founded by Skelligers and erroneously called Vinland by many Nordlings—and beginning the decline of the old non-human order through the introduction of feudalism, the Tuyotuki Islands underwent a comparable historical transformation.

This should likewise not be confused with the settlement of Nilfgaard. By this period, the Lower Albanians had already inhabited southern regions of the western coast for centuries, predating the arrival of the Nordlings by several hundred years.

In Tuyotuki, the transformation began with the arrival of the Tsukierabi. Unlike the relatively small groups that initially reached the western coast, the Tsukierabi arrived in great numbers on the night of June 7, 767 After the

Resurrection, according to the Nordling calendar.

Their homeland remains unknown. Most theories place it somewhere in Bia Thin, particularly in or around what are now Celephaïs, Ketu Rahu or Carcosa and its neighboring countries, since modern Carcosa itself possesses no coastline.

According to tradition, the Tsukierabi reached the islands by following the light of the Moon reflected upon the coastal waters. They were led by a man named Daruma, a high priest and former sailor who, during the migration, returned to his old profession one final time.

The sheer scale of the migration has led some historians to suggest that the Tsukierabi may have been exiled following a religious schism. No conclusive evidence supporting this hypothesis, however, has been discovered in Celephaïs, Ketu Rahu, Carcosa or their surrounding territories.

Arrival on Kami and the First Revelation

The entire migrant population initially arrived on Kami, at that time the least populated island in the archipelago.

They established coastal settlements and remained largely undisturbed for several years. As their population grew, however, the need for additional land and resources forced them to explore further inland. Their earliest encounters with the island's non-human inhabitants appear to have been peaceful.

The more immediate danger came instead from the environment. The newcomers encountered diseases against which their bodies possessed little or no resistance.

One outbreak proved particularly devastating and infected Daruma alongside many other members of the community. While suffering from severe fever, Daruma supposedly experienced what his followers would later call the First Revelation. According to tradition, the being subsequently worshipped as Tsuyoi tsuki no otoko, *the Strong Moon Man*, revealed to him that the islands were to become the new homeland of his people: "*an abandoned garden that had to be beautified if they wished to survive there in the long term".*

Daruma eventually recovered. Approximately 40% of the early Tsukierabi population—including members of the original migrant generation and their first descendants—did not. Only around 60% survived.

The enormous collective trauma produced by this mortality transformed the young Tsukierabi society. Daruma's followers increasingly interpreted his revelation through their suffering, and the community gradually radicalized.

They also searched for an explanation—and a culprit. Having recently encountered the unfamiliar non-human inhabitants of Kami, many Tsukierabi came to believe that these strange peoples had somehow caused the disease rather than recognizing it as the consequence of their exposure to an unfamiliar tropical disease environment. So, they prepared their revenge.

The Burning of the Weeds

The resulting attack became known as the Burning of the Weeds, marking the beginning of the Tsukierabi conquest of the archipelago. Its target was Stœmæy, the non-human country occupying Kami.

Daruma—once sailor, then priest, now prophet—became a military leader. During the destruction of Stœmæy, he killed its highest authority, the oni known as the Planner ¥aūñėtīñ “the Peaceful”.

Among ¥aūñėtīñ's possessions, Daruma discovered a letter requesting assistance from the other islands. After surviving inhabitants capable of understanding the document were interrogated and made to translate it, the Tsukierabi discovered something they had not previously understood: Kami was only one island within a much larger archipelago.

Daruma subsequently experienced the Second Revelation while taking a nap. According to his followers, the revelation confirmed that the lands beyond Kami formed part of the same garden entrusted to them.

The journey that followed would centuries later become one of the events symbolically represented in the Tuyotukian coat of arms, alongside the original moonlit arrival of the Tsukierabi.

Conquest of the Archipelago

After Kami, the remaining islands began to fall one after another. There was no systematic attempt at negotiation.

The Tsukierabi now feared that contact with the non-human populations might expose them to another disease—perhaps one severe enough to destroy their surviving population entirely. Fear of extinction therefore became one of the principal justifications for conquest.

As the campaigns expanded, numerous non-human communities were pushed increasingly toward the coast. Some were eventually left with no viable terrestrial refuge and fled to sea. These displaced populations became the origin of the wozous.

The preexisting human inhabitants of the islands, principally the Sajibito, suffered a different fate. Because the Tsukierabi recognized them as members of their own species, they were generally subjected to assimilation rather than extermination.

A similar process affected those non-humans who chose to collaborate with the conquerors. Some allied themselves with the Tsukierabi in exchange for survival and protection from extermination. Their descendants would eventually form part of the recognized non-human populations incorporated into modern Tuyotukian society.

The Departure of the Dragons

The remaining dragons attempted to repeat the strategy once employed by Shinryū during the First Conjunction. They left the islands in search of outside assistance. Once again, the attempt failed. For reasons that remain uncertain, some dragons came to blame the absent Shinryū for their failure. Shinryū himself had disappeared so completely that not even the other dragons knew where he was.

These dragons believed that his earlier failure to obtain assistance during the First Conjunction had prevented him from establishing the alliances and relationships that might have allowed their own diplomatic mission to succeed centuries later.

Resentment gradually became hatred. For some, hatred became cruelty. Unable to punish Shinryū himself, certain dragons eventually turned their desire for vengeance against innocent peoples instead.

The most notorious example was Watatsumi. Centuries later, after returning to the islands, Watatsumi would eventually be killed by Gilgamesh, the Manticore witcher who founded the School of the Dragon. The place where Watatsumi's enormous body fell would subsequently become the site upon which the Dragon School fortress was constructed.

The Fertilization of the Garden and the End of the Conquest (790s A.R)

According to the calculations of Fabio Sachs, the Tsukierabi conquest of the Tuyotuki Islands ended during the 790s After the Resurrection, most likely in 795 AR.

The last island to fall was Teien, the largest and principal island of the archipelago. Its conquest lasted approximately twenty years, largely because the remaining non-human territories conducted an extensive guerrilla war against the Tsukierabi occupation. These resistance movements would later be remembered as the second major historical precedent of the Hyakki Yagyō.

By the final years of the war, however, the balance had become overwhelmingly favorable to the Tsukierabi. Their forces no longer consisted exclusively of the original conquering population. They were now supported by assimilated native humans, allied non-humans and, increasingly, their own magical practitioners. During the conquest, the Tsukierabi had learned to manipulate the magical forces of the islands, eventually giving rise to the first madōshi.

The remaining resistance was gradually pushed back until Ka'po'tō, the final ruler of Teien—and the last ruler of any pre-conquest Tuyotukian state—was left with little territory under his control. The precise nature of Ka'po'tō's title remains uncertain. "*King*" is merely the closest human translation available.

The Battles of the Thousand Hills

Ka'po'tō's remaining forces suffered their decisive defeat during a sequence of engagements collectively remembered as the Battles of the Thousand Hills.

Almost his entire army was destroyed. Ka'po'tō and his surviving allies withdrew to his palace—or, once again, whatever structure most closely corresponds to the human concept translated as a palace.

With conventional victory effectively impossible, Ka'po'tō ordered his remaining alchemists, among them Hoseki's paternal grandfather, to create an alchemical weapon capable of inflicting catastrophic losses upon the advancing Tsukierabi. The resulting substance became known as Dragon's Breath. Its formula would later be lost.

Ka'po'tō hoped that even a pyrrhic victory might inflict sufficient damage upon the invaders to change the course of the conflict at some later point. Dragon's Breath was therefore spread throughout the surroundings of the palace before the arrival of the enemy army.

As the Tsukierabi approached, Ka'po'tō mocked their religious conception of the

islands as a garden, declaring that: *he would fertilize their garden with their ashes and make it more beautiful than ever*.

When the siege began, changing temperatures triggered the compound. The surroundings erupted into flames. The advancing army was rapidly consumed.

But Ka'po'tō's alchemists had developed Dragon's Breath under desperate wartime conditions and had never been able to test it properly. They therefore did not know how easily the substance could escape containment. The fire spread with extraordinary speed. It did not stop with the invading army. It reached the palace. Ka'po'tō, his remaining followers and the last representatives of the old political order were consumed alongside their enemies.

With them died the final surviving vestige of the Tuyotuki Islands as they had existed before the Tsukierabi conquest. The event became known as the Fertilization of the Garden.

Daruma, *King of Kings* was the only one member of the invading army survived the catastrophe: Daruma.

When he returned to the Tsukierabi and recounted what had occurred, his already immense religious prestige increased even further. The man who had guided the migration, survived the epidemic, received the First and Second Revelations, led the conquest and now apparently emerged as the sole survivor of an inferno that had annihilated an entire army became almost impossible to separate from the religious narrative surrounding him.

Daruma was subsequently appointed ruler of the conquered archipelago under the title: *Ō no ō* (王の王), King of Kings. The title reflected his position as the ruler who had defeated, under his leadership, all the previous rulers of the islands. Centuries later, Nilfgaardian writers would translate Ō no ō as Emperor.

Daruma subsequently married and produced heirs, establishing the imperial dynasty that would rule the modern Tuyotuki Islands. He was approximately 50 years old when the conquest ended. Daruma would rule for another 45 years, dying at the age of 95.

During the period between approximately 65 and 85 years of age, he regularly resided in what was originally little more than his vacation residence. It was there that he would eventually die. The building would subsequently become known as Shōten no Miya (昇天の宮), the *Palace of Spiritual Ascension*, following

the belief that Daruma ascended beyond the heavens after his death.

His eldest son succeeded him in the throne.

The Regrowth of the Weeds (840–845 A.R)

Following Daruma's death in 840 After the Resurrection, his 35-year-old son Katsuro inherited responsibility for maintaining the new order established throughout the Tuyotuki Islands.

His reign, however, would last only five years. Shortly after his accession, a series of uprisings erupted among both the islands' non-human populations and the native human peoples. Historians would later collectively refer to these rebellions as the Regrowth of the Weeds.

Despite the alliances and accommodations established during the Tsukierabi conquest, the conditions experienced by many native humans and allied non-humans became even worse after the war ended. The rebels therefore sought not merely to restore the political system that had existed before the conquest, but to overthrow the still-fragile Tsukierabi order and replace both it and its predecessor with something better.

Their timing was deliberate. Daruma's forty-five-year reign had largely been dedicated to the enormous task of creating a functioning state out of the recently conquered archipelago. By the time of his death, the new order existed, but its institutions remained comparatively young and vulnerable.

The rebels believed this weakness could be exploited. What they had failed to anticipate was Katsuro himself. Katsuro "the Cruel".

Katsuro was no sheltered palace prince. From childhood, he had been trained by some of the finest surviving veterans of the Tsukierabi conquest and had developed into an accomplished warrior. As the rebellions began to emerge, Katsuro reacted before most of them could fully consolidate. One by one, he crushed them.

His methods displayed a degree of brutality considered exceptional even when compared with the original conquest of the islands. It was during these campaigns that he acquired the name by which history would remember him Katsuro "the Cruel".

The final major uprising was led by a non-human force known as the Army of a Thousand Colors, named after the extraordinarily varied clothing worn by its

members. Katsuro eventually confronted them at Kaijinzan.

The Battle of Kaijinzan (845 A.R)

The Battle of Kaijinzan became the final engagement of the Regrowth of the Weeds.

Katsuro's forces defeated the Army of a Thousand Colors, effectively bringing the rebellions to an end. Katsuro himself, however, would not survive the victory. During the battle, Kaijinzan erupted. The catastrophe killed Katsuro despite the successful outcome of the engagement and subsequently earned the volcano its historical epithet the Mountain of Ashes.

Before his death and the final victory of his forces, Katsuro issued one last command once the rebellions had been defeated, the islands required the creation of a new order capable of surviving in the long term.

The Creation of the Modern Caste System

Following Katsuro's death, Tuyotukian statesmen began developing precisely such a system. Their work ultimately produced the foundations of the modern caste structure, together with the complex social mechanisms that would eventually characterize Tuyotukian society.

The system was approved by Tadashiro, Katsuro's youngest son and the only one of his sons to survive the rebellions. Tadashiro subsequently ascended to the throne and oversaw its implementation throughout the islands.

The Regrowth of the Weeds had therefore failed to destroy the Tsukierabi order. Paradoxically, however, the rebellions forced that order to transform itself into something fundamentally different.

Birth of the Hyakki Yagyō

The Army of a Thousand Colors had been defeated at Kaijinzan, but it was not completely destroyed. Its survivors abandoned conventional resistance and increasingly adopted harsher, less restrained and more clandestine methods. These remnants eventually formed the organization that became known as the Hyakki Yagyō.

Its objectives likewise evolved. Rather than simply continuing the Regrowth of the Weeds, the Hyakki Yagyō developed aims increasingly resembling those associated with its more modern incarnations, transforming the defeated

resistance movement into a persistent paramilitary force that would survive long beyond the rebellion that created it.

The Shogunate (845–855 A.R)

The principal problem surrounding Tadashiro's accession was his age.

When Katsuro the Cruel died at the Battle of Kaijinzan in 845 After the Resurrection, his only surviving son was merely ten years old. Although Tadashiro formally inherited the throne, he was clearly incapable of immediately exercising the full political and military responsibilities associated with the position of Ō no ō.

The islands therefore entered a period of regency. Authority was assumed by the second-highest figure within the Tuyotukan military hierarchythe Shogūn, or Great General, who ordinarily served immediately beneath the monarch as their principal military substitute.

This arrangement would subsequently give the period its historiographical name the Shogunate.

The Shogūn governed while the recently designed social order was implemented, consolidated and strengthened throughout the islands, preparing both the state and the young Tadashiro for the eventual restoration of direct imperial government. Ironically, despite being a period of military rule immediately following the extraordinarily violent Regrowth of the Weeds, the Shogunate proved remarkably peaceful.

No major internal crisis comparable to the preceding rebellions occurred. The principal disturbances came instead from occasional attacks by the maritime wozous and the newly developing Hyakki Yagyō. The two forces would eventually cooperate in an attack that killed the Shogūn.

By then, Tadashiro had reached adulthood and was finally capable of assuming de facto, rather than merely formal, control of the empire. The death nevertheless affected him profoundly.

During the decade-long regency, the Shogūn had effectively become a father figure to Tadashiro, who had lost Katsuro when he was only ten. His death at the hands of the Hyakki Yagyō and wozous therefore encouraged the young ruler to begin looking beyond the boundaries of the Tuyotuki Islands.

Tadashiro himself would not fully transform this new outlook into an imperial

expansionist project. That would be accomplished after his death by his son, who took his father's growing interest in the world beyond the archipelago considerably further. The result would be the birth of what historians later called the First Tuyotukian Empire.

The Reign of Tadashiro (855–915 A.R)

The reign of Tadashiro, later remembered by the epithet "*the Bridge-Builder*," was profoundly shaped by his upbringing under the Shogūn who had governed the islands during his minority.

Although Tadashiro could occasionally rule harshly, his sixty-year period of direct government was generally characterized by stability and prosperity. The most significant internal crisis of his reign occurred relatively early, during the Great Peasant Grievance of 858 A.R. In the Tuyotukian calendar, the event occurred in Year 91, as a full century had not yet passed since the arrival of the Tsukierabi and the beginning of the conquest.

Rather than producing another major period of instability comparable to the Regrowth of the Weeds, the crisis ultimately resulted in monetary reform and the establishment of the ryo and kozeni as the principal and complementary currencies of the islands.

The most celebrated aspect of Tadashiro's reign, however, was his foreign policy. Tadashiro increasingly looked beyond the archipelago and established relationships with numerous nations of the Eastern Coast. These diplomatic connections earned him his historical epithet Tadashiro "the Bridge-Builder".

His bridges were intended principally as channels through which Tuyotuki and its neighbors could interact as political partners. His successor would interpret them very differently.

The Radicalization of Takemaru

During his youth, Tadashiro's son Takemaru suffered a serious hunting accident that left him unconscious for an extended period. Shortly before awakening, Takemaru claimed to have experienced a vision of his great-grandfather, Daruma.

The experience profoundly intensified his religious beliefs. Where Tadashiro saw the relationships he had established with the eastern coast as bridges permitting exchange between equals, Takemaru increasingly came to regard those same

bridges as paths through which the order of the Tuyotuki Islands could be extended beyond the archipelago.

Tadashiro died in 915 AR, at the age of eighty. His sixty-year direct reign came to an end with one of the most stable periods in early modern Tuyotukan history. Takemaru, then thirty years old, succeeded him.

The Age of Contacts (915–930s A.R)

The reign of Takemaru is traditionally divided into two major periods.

The first became known as the Age of Contacts, lasting from his accession in 915 After the Resurrection until approximately the 930s. In many respects, this period represented a continuation of the foreign policy pursued by his father, Tadashiro "the Bridge-Builder". The principal difference was geographical.

Where Tadashiro had established diplomatic bridges with known nations of the eastern coast, Takemaru increasingly directed Tuyotukian attention toward territories that remained completely unknown to them. During the 920s, Tuyotukian expeditions reached the southern portion of the region composed of numerous different archipelagos and solitary islands known simply as the Chain, discovering the territory they called Tōsenkoku.

Exploration continued northward during the following decade. By the 930s, Tuyotukian expeditions had reached the remaining portions of the Chain, bringing the islands into contact with the contemporary Okamese Empire.

Initial relations between the two powers were peaceful. This changed as Okamese expansionism increasingly threatened the political balance of the region. Tuyotuki became progressively alarmed by the growth of Okamese power, and tensions eventually escalated into open conflict.

The resulting Tuyotukian campaigns marked the transition from the Age of Contacts into the second major phase of Takemaru's reign the emergence of the First Tuyotukian Empire as a regional power.

The Okamese–Tuyotukian War

Having already established previous contact with the Okamese, the Tuyotukians possessed an unusually detailed understanding of their society, capabilities and weaknesses. They exploited this knowledge during the subsequent war.

Tuyotukian forces expanded northward, initially targeting the Okamese

possessions distributed throughout the Chain before eventually carrying the conflict into the Okami Islands themselves. The conflict became known as the Okamese–Tuyotukian War.

Tuyotuki ultimately prevailed. The victory resulted not merely in the destruction of Okamese control over the Chain, but in the collapse of the Okamese Empire itself. The Okami Islands were subsequently subjugated and transformed into a vassal state of the First Tuyotukian Empire.

Conquest and Colonization of the Chain

Tōsenkoku was also conquered during the Tuyotukian expansion.As Tuyotuki advanced through the Chain in preparation for its campaigns farther north, the territories discovered only decades earlier were progressively incorporated into the expanding empire.

The consequences for their existing populations were severe. Non-human peoples inhabiting the region, including the mā*qāllī, mo-tang and chi,ts'e-a, suffered several different fates depending upon territory and circumstance.

Some were exterminated. Others were expelled toward the sea, where many eventually joined the existing wozou populations. Still others escaped direct conquest by withdrawing into isolated areas and concealing their communities from the new authorities.

Their former territories were progressively settled by Tuyotukian colonists belonging to multiple ethnic groups, who subsequently integrated and intermarried with the preexisting human populations of the islands.

The Rise of the First Tuyotukian Empire as a Great Power (930s–960s A.R)

Although the First Tuyotukian Empire had already effectively emerged following the defeat and vassalization of the Okami Islands, it did not immediately become the major regional power for which it would later be remembered.

That transformation occurred primarily between the 950s and 960s After the Resurrection. By the 950s, Tuyotuki had consolidated most of its recently acquired island territories. The principal exception remained the Okami Islands themselves, where organized pockets of resistance would continue until approximately 987 AR.

The expansion nevertheless provided Tuyotuki with considerable additional resources and strategic positions. Combined with the archipelago's longstanding military traditions and inherently maritime culture, this allowed the empire to maintain an increasingly powerful fleet.

Tuyotukian expansion consequently ceased to be limited to the islands. Imperial forces turned toward the eastern coast of the Old Continent. The first continental targets included nations that had previously maintained friendly relations with Tuyotuki. Imperial commanders deliberately exploited these diplomatic relationships, attacking former allies who did not expect Tuyotukian aggression.

Once these initial campaigns had succeeded, the empire expanded its operations against other states throughout the region. In less than a decade, the scale of Tuyotukian territorial expansion became extraordinary. Ketu Rahu fell under imperial control, followed by other coastal continental states such as Sudhaya, Lám-Chxæ and Celephaïs. The islands of Pàhou, Mu and Tenijima were likewise conquered.

Tuyotukian forces seized the southern portion of the Asatta Peninsula, while imperial expansion reached as far north as Shinrefúg.

Numerous smaller enclaves were also established or conquered throughout the eastern coast, including several coastal cities in Bia Thin. These Biathinian possessions ultimately became one of the most historically significant consequences of the continental campaigns, as some remained under Tuyotukian control considerably longer than most of the empire's other foreign territories.

Dynastic Succession

Takemaru did not survive the entire period of expansion he had initiated. A combination of advanced age and the physical consequences of continued participation in warfare eventually resulted in his death during the campaigns.

He was succeeded by his son. The new emperor's reign proved brief. He too died in combat, although he succeeded in stabilizing many of the territories conquered during his father's campaigns before his death.

His daughter subsequently inherited the empire. Beginning in the 980s, she became the first ruling Empress in Tuyotukian history. Young and highly ambitious, she attempted to expand the empire beyond the already enormous territories acquired by her predecessors.

Her campaigns instead produced the empire's first substantial territorial losses. Later Tuyotukian historiography attributed these failures partly to her youth and emotional temperament.

The political reaction contributed to the establishment of the rule preventing women from becoming ruling Empresses before reaching approximately fifty years of age. Only later would this restriction acquire its familiar religious justification: menstruation came to be interpreted as evidence of a divine curse from which women were purified only upon reaching menopause.

Thus, a restriction that originated substantially from the political interpretation of a failed reign was eventually transformed into a religiously legitimized principle of succession.

The First Tuyotukian Attempted Invasion of Bia Thin

The Tuyotukian interpretation of these campaigns differed considerably from that of the peoples they conquered.

Within the historiographical traditions of numerous countries throughout Bia Thin and neighboring regions, including the Asattan Peninsula, the continental expansion of the First Tuyotukian Empire became collectively remembered as: the First Invasion Attempt of the Tuyotukian Empire to Bia Thin.

The Age of the Strong Moon (10th–13th centuries A.R)

The approximately three centuries following the Tuyotukian conquests in Bia Thin and beyond would later become known as the Age of the Strong Moon. The name reflected the profound influence Tuyotuki exercised throughout its territories and neighboring regions during this period, leaving a legacy that could be regarded as both beneficial and destructive depending upon the population, territory and historical tradition involved.

Although the First Tuyotukian Empire had already begun experiencing territorial setbacks by the late 10th century, its continental possessions and maritime networks continued to provide access deep into regions previously distant from the archipelago.

One of the most consequential developments occurred during the 990s, when Tuyotukian merchants and diplomats traveled increasingly far inland through Bia Thin. Taking advantage of the empire's coastal possessions as points of access, they eventually reached the mountain range separating Bia Thin from the

rest of the east, what would later become the country of Buyan.

At the time, Buyan did not yet exist as an independent political entity. Its future territories instead belonged to Greater Zerrikania, then a considerably larger matriarchal state. The resulting contact between Tuyotuki and Greater Zerrikania initiated a chain of events whose consequences would not become fully apparent for more than a century.

Ultimately, this connection contributed to the arrival in Tuyotuki, around 1100 AR, of the first witchers belonging to what would eventually become the School of the Dragon. These witchers were originally members of the School of the Manticore. Their establishment in the archipelago would mark the beginning of one of the most distinctive witcher traditions of the eastern coast.

Decline of the First Tuyotukian Empire

The First Tuyotukian Empire did not collapse because of a decisive military defeat.

Nor did it fall primarily because of incompetent rulers, catastrophic natural disasters or a single overwhelming internal rebellion, the only one being the rebellion who took place in southern Asatta and this rebellion was pacific rather than violent, so in a sense not counting as rebellion by many. Its principal enemy proved considerably less dramatic: *administration*.

As the empire expanded, so too did the bureaucracy required to maintain it. Over time, the administrative structures necessary to govern its numerous islands, continental territories, enclaves, dependencies and distant populations became increasingly expensive and cumbersome.

Eventually, the bureaucracy intended to preserve imperial order itself became a threat to that order. Successive rulers therefore faced a fundamental contradiction. Attempting to retain every imperial possession risked producing a structural crisis severe enough to threaten not merely the empire, but the continued political unity of the Tuyotuki Islands themselves.

Territories consequently had to be relinquished. Initially these withdrawals could be limited. Later rulers were forced to surrender progressively more. The First Tuyotukian Empire therefore contracted not through a single catastrophic collapse but through a long process of deliberate and increasingly unavoidable imperial retrenchment.

Preserving Tuyotuki ultimately became more important than preserving the empire. This process would eventually culminate in a major internal crisis capable of shaking the country to its foundations.

Before that crisis occurred, however, Tuyotuki would make one final major attempt to reverse its declining external position. The result would be the Second Tuyotukian Attempted Invasion of Bia Thin, an expansion that would bring Tuyotukian forces toward the Sundalaic Islands. There, the declining eastern maritime empire would encounter something it had not previously faced in quite the same manner: another great empire approaching from the West.

The Second Tuyotukian Attempted Invasion of Bia Thin

The Second Tuyotukian Attempted Invasion of Bia Thin took place around the middle of the 13th century After the Resurrection, during the final stages of the First Tuyotukian Empire's decline.

By this period, almost nothing remained of the empire's former continental possessions. Tuyotuki retained only a small number of enclaves, all located within Bia Thin. The immediate cause of the conflict was not an attempt by Tuyotuki to restore its former imperial glory. Instead, several states bordering the surviving Tuyotukian enclaves attempted to seize them.

The imperial response consisted of military expansion around these territories with the intention of establishing security zones capable of protecting what remained of the Tuyotukian presence in Bia Thin. From the perspective of neighboring states, however, the distinction was considerably less apparent.

A former imperial power that had previously conquered portions of Bia Thin was once again occupying territory beyond the boundaries of its enclaves. Consequently, Biathinian historiography and of closer regions would remember the conflict as the Second Tuyotukian Attempted Invasion of Bia Thin.

The Tuyotukian response ultimately failed. By this period, the First Tuyotukian Empire had entered a state of *de jure* decline and effective *de facto* extinction. Alliances formed between neighboring Biathinian states proved capable of defeating the remaining imperial forces and eliminating the last Tuyotukian enclaves.

Their disappearance produced an unusual political phenomenon along portions of the coast. Rather than every former enclave being incorporated exclusively

into one of the victorious states, several became territories administered through bicephalous governments, jointly belonging to the two neighboring nations whose alliance had been responsible for their conquest.

The last remnants of centuries of Tuyotukian rule in Bia Thin therefore survived not as Tuyotukian possessions, but as peculiar jointly governed territories created from their partition.

The Sundalaic Project

The definitive loss of the Biathinian enclaves forced Tuyotuki to reconsider its position beyond its traditional regional sphere. This process eventually brought the empire into contact with the Sundalaic Islands.

The reigning emperor, Daruma II, regarded the archipelago as an ideal objective. His intention, however, was not simply to recreate the territorial glory of the First Tuyotukian Empire. Daruma II believed the islands offered the possibility of creating something better than the old imperial system.

Expansion into the Sundalaic Islands could simultaneously provide an outlet for another increasingly serious domestic problem overpopulation within the Tuyotuki Islands themselves. And with that, Tuyotukian attention began moving beyond its traditional eastern sphere.

Contact Between the West and the East (Early 1250s–1257 A.R)

The first sustained contact between the powers of the western coast and the Eastern coast occurred during the early and mid-1250s.

Earlier connections had existed through Haakland, although these were overwhelmingly commercial in nature and largely limited to the silk trade with Redania as well with Zerrikania but even more limited after the Day of Fire in 1146 and like those of Haakland, overwhelmingly commercial in nature. The encounter between Nilfgaard and Tuyotuki represented something fundamentally different sustained political, military and eventually diplomatic interaction between two major powers belonging to opposite ends of the world.

Rather than resulting from exploration or deliberate diplomacy, however, the encounter emerged accidentally from overlapping imperial ambitions in the Sundalaic Islands. Both the Nilfgaardian Empire and the declining Tuyotukian Empire sought to establish themselves within the archipelago for entirely independent reasons.

Nilfgaardian Expansion

Nilfgaardian interest in the Sundalaic Islands originated indirectly through the establishment of Taremu, a Nilfgaardian trading colony and special economic zone in Hannu.

It was there that Nilfgaardians first learned extensively of the archipelago. With the empire requiring an increasingly large quantity of resources to sustain its expanding military and economic apparatus in preparation for what would eventually become the Northern Wars, the Sundalaic Islands appeared particularly attractive.

Politically, they seemed relatively insignificant. Economically and strategically, however, they possessed considerable value. Nilfgaard consequently initiated an attempted conquest of the archipelago.

Tuyotukian Expansion

Tuyotukian motivations were substantially different.

Following the definitive collapse of their remaining enclaves in Bia Thin, Emperor Daruma II sought expansion beyond Tuyotuki's traditional sphere of influence. The Sundalaic Islands offered both an opportunity to develop a new form of overseas presence—rather than recreating the enormous and increasingly unsustainable First Tuyotukian Empire—and a potential solution to the severe overpopulation affecting the home islands.

Neither empire initially knew that the other was pursuing the same archipelago. They would discover it on the battlefield.

The Battle of Sabana

The decisive moment occurred during a battle on Sabana part of a series of confrontations known as the Green Battles.

Nilfgaardian and Tuyotukian forces found themselves simultaneously fighting the native defenders and facing probable defeat if either continued independently. An improvised military alliance followed.

The resulting joint victory became the first significant instance of direct cooperation between forces from the western and eastern coast. What had begun as battlefield necessity gradually developed into informal cooperation.

Nilfgaardian and Tuyotukian forces tolerated—and occasionally actively supported—one another while pursuing their respective campaigns throughout the archipelago.

Communication presented an obvious problem. Soldiers, sailors and local intermediaries consequently developed a rudimentary Nilfgaardian–Idaisa pidgin, allowing the two forces to exchange basic information long before formal diplomatic channels existed.

From Battlefield Cooperation to Diplomacy

As operations continued, the generals appointed by both empires to oversee their respective campaigns eventually met personally. Their encounters resulted in exchanges of military intelligence, logistical information and strategic assessments, while also producing a functional personal relationship between the commanders themselves.

Both eventually recognized that they were dealing not merely with another expeditionary force, but with representatives of a distant imperial power whose existence could fundamentally alter their respective understanding of the world.

Reports were sent east and west. Tuyotuki responded by organizing a formal diplomatic delegation. Its destination was the nearest established Nilfgaardian territory accessible to them Mekan.

The delegation was received by an imperial representative acting in the name of the ruler later remembered by Nilfgaardian historiography as the Usurper. The meeting at Mekan is generally considered the first official diplomatic encounter between the Nilfgaardian and Tuyotukian Empires, and consequently the formal beginning of sustained relations between the western and eastern coasts of the Old Continent.

The Tuyotukian delegation was headed by ambassador Donengar Akehi. Akehi became fascinated by Nilfgaardian culture, society and institutions to such a degree that he ultimately chose not to immediately return home.

His stay became permanent. Akehi eventually became a naturalized Nilfgaardian citizen and enlisted in the imperial army, where he rose through its ranks until achieving the position of commander. Appropriately, part of his later service took place on Mekan—the same island upon which he had first officially encountered Nilfgaard.

Accompanying Akehi was Baem, a witcher of the School of the Dragon originally

assigned as the ambassador's protector. Baem remained in Akehi's service while attempting to restore honor he believed himself to have lost due to his exile. With Akehi's eventual consent, the witcher traveled farther west. There he ultimately joined the School of the Viper, becoming one of the few known Eastern witchers to enter a witcher school of the western coast.

Formal Relations

During the same year as the Mekan meeting, Nilfgaard responded by dispatching its own diplomatic mission to the Tuyotuki Islands. The mission succeeded. A permanent Nilfgaardian embassy was established on Tawalisi, creating the first enduring western diplomatic presence within Tuyotuki.

The new relationship soon began producing military and cultural exchanges. In 1265, Nilfgaardian Military Intelligence formally adopted a Tuyotukian throwing weapon traditionally associated with shinobi and witchers of the School of the Dragon. The shuriken entered Nilfgaardian service under the new name orion.

Relations survived the overthrow of the Usurper. Following the restauration of House var Emreis and thus the ascension of Emhyr var Emreis, Tuyotukian representatives attended the emperor's coronation and presented ceremonial gifts to the new ruler.

Among them were the Tuyotukian suit of armor known as the White Tiger of the West, together with the steel and silver swords known as the Nine-Tailed Vixen. Their presence at the coronation demonstrated that Tuyotukian relations were understood as relations with Nilfgaard as a state, rather than merely with the Usurper's regime.

Mekan consequently retained considerable symbolic importance as the place where East and West first formally met.

The failure of the Sundalaic Conquests

Diplomatic success did not translate into complete military success for either empire. For Nilfgaard, the attempted conquest of the Sundalaic Islands was largely a failure. Past Ofieri cultural influence had profoundly shaped the archipelago, to the point that the islands constituted a sultanate ruled by a sultan. Their political organization and resistance consequently proved considerably stronger than Nilfgaardian planners had anticipated.

Only one island was successfully conquered Sabana. Fortunately for Nilfgaard, Sabana was also the most strategically valuable conquest it could have obtained.

Tuyotuki achieved greater territorial penetration, but its campaign was likewise a failure when measured against its original ambitions. It conquered no entire island. Instead, Tuyotukian forces conquered or established small enclaves across several islands, concentrated primarily in coastal cities.

Nevertheless, one of Daruma II's most immediate objectives was achieved. The Tuyotukian overpopulation crisis was alleviated through the combined demographic effects of the war itself and organized settlement within the newly controlled or created enclaves.

Neither empire therefore conquered the Sundalaic Islands. But both remained. And, considerably more importantly, they discovered one another.

The Prelude to the Shaking (1263–1283 A.R)

Following the events in the Sundalaic Islands, Tuyotuki entered a period of relative peace and prosperity lasting approximately two decades. Several factors contributed to this stability. The empire enjoyed competent government, the demographic pressures caused by overpopulation had been substantially alleviated, and the newly obtained or established overseas enclaves in the Sundalaic Islands provided additional wealth and commercial opportunities.

Paradoxically, the prosperity of the period helped create the conditions for the crisis that followed. Emperor Daruma II, freed from many of the immediate political and economic problems that had previously occupied the imperial administration, increasingly indulged one of his principal personal interests women.

Over the course of his reign, Daruma II fathered numerous illegitimate children. More significantly, many of their mothers belonged to families connected with the most important clans of the Tuyotuki Islands. Daruma II himself presented these relationships partly as an unconventional means of reinforcing national unity by establishing blood ties between the imperial dynasty and the principal clans of the realm.

In the short term, this arguably strengthened certain relationships. In the long term, however, it created a large network of individuals possessing varying degrees of imperial ancestry and connections to competing centers of political power. Without realizing it, Daruma II had planted one of the principal seeds of the future Tuyotukian Civil War.

The situation became still more dangerous when the emperor simultaneously initiated a major campaign against suspected corruption within the state apparatus. Consequently, numerous powerful families found themselves in the peculiar position of being both increasingly connected to the imperial family by blood and increasingly threatened by imperial scrutiny. The combination would eventually prove explosive.

The Fall of the School of the Dragon

Despite the general prosperity of the period, two major developments disturbed the apparent stability of the islands.

The first was the fall of the School of the Dragon. The school did not become completely extinct, and its surviving members would eventually allow it to re-emerge. Nevertheless, its collapse represented one of the most significant disruptions suffered by the Tuyotukian witcher tradition.

The second was the rise of Hoseki to the leadership of the Hyakki Yagyō.

The two events eventually became connected. Rather than killing Hoseki, surviving witchers of the School of the Dragon reached an agreement with her: her life would be spared provided that she abandoned the Hyakki Yagyō and permanently withdrew from its activities. Hoseki accepted.

From that point onward, the feared former leader effectively disappeared. In her place emerged an apparently unremarkable—if exceptionally talented—elven geomancer. Hoseki eventually became famous for the remarkable accuracy of her divinations, while virtually nobody among the wider population recognized her as the former leader of the Hyakki Yagyō.

Several factors made the deception possible. Members of the Hyakki Yagyō traditionally operated using disguises, while the relatively few descriptions provided by individuals who had actually seen Hoseki's face had become severely distorted through repeated retellings.

The woman who had once occupied one of the most dangerous positions in Tuyotuki could therefore live openly without being recognized. The Dragon witchers had succeeded in removing her from the conflict without killing her. But the agreement came at a considerable price.

The Drums of War (1283 A.R)

The Tuyotukian Civil War began during the final months of 1283, although the chain of events directly responsible for it had begun earlier that year. At the beginning of 1283, Emperor Daruma II, continuing his campaign against corruption within the imperial administration, ordered the execution of his trusted right-hand after allegations of corruption were brought against him.

The execution had an unintended consequence. The man's son, Kumawakamaru, was devastated by his father's death. Unable—or unwilling—to believe the accusations, Kumawakamaru gradually became convinced that his father had been used as a scapegoat and that the true corruption originated with Daruma II himself.

His grief became a desire for revenge. Kumawakamaru did not initially seek revolution. He had no intention of destroying the Tuyotukian political or social order. He wanted Daruma II dead.

First, he persuaded his own clan to support his cause. Then, using his charisma and considerable talent for deception, Kumawakamaru and his allies began a covert campaign targeting the numerous descendants of Daruma II connected with the principal clans of Tuyotuki. Throughout the following months, rumors, manipulated information, suspicions and provocations were carefully distributed among the various potential heirs.

Each was gradually encouraged to perceive the others as threats. Because the imperial descendants were themselves connected to powerful clans, their growing paranoia inevitably spread into the families, military networks and political alliances surrounding them. Kumawakamaru believed that creating sufficient distrust among the potential heirs would provide the circumstances necessary to assassinate Daruma II and avenge his father.

He also made several apparently minor moves whose consequences would only become apparent later.

Yet Kumawakamaru fundamentally misunderstood the system he was manipulating. He sought vengeance, not the destruction of the established order. He believed that turning every potential heir against every other potential heir could remain a controlled political instrument. He was catastrophically wrong.

The Sadness of the Garden in Winter

The conspiracy reached its decisive stage in December 1283, at the port of

Odaiba, on Tawalisi.

Daruma II had traveled there to meet the Nilfgaardian ambassador. Among the matters intended for discussion was the establishment of a new embassy following the destruction of the previous diplomatic presence during the same earthquake that had also ended Zangvebar's attempt to establish its own embassy in the islands.

The meeting never took place. Odaiba was suddenly besieged by forces whose identities were initially unknown. Only after Kumawakamaru's later capture, interrogation and execution would the imperial authorities establish the composition of the attacking force. It had consisted of an extraordinary coalition Hyakki Yagyō militants, wozous and ronin.

The ronin were former samurai who had lost their masters and clan affiliations as a consequence of Daruma II's institutional purges. Many sought to recover the privileges and social security associated with membership in a clan. Kumawakamaru provided them with an opportunity. Some additionally sympathized with him personally, perceiving the execution of his father as another example of the destruction produced by the emperor's anti-corruption campaign.

Wozou participation was particularly significant. Their involvement had been suspected almost immediately due to their centuries-long conflict with Tuyotuki, although it would only be definitively confirmed following Kumawakamaru's interrogation. Fear of further wozous operations led the imperial government to order the closure of Tuyotukian ports to international traffic, while maintaining inter-island maritime connections.

What followed at Odaiba became known as the Sadness of the Garden in Winter.

Emperor Daruma II was killed. Almost everyone present was massacred. Almost. There were survivors. A small group of travelers who had only recently arrived from lands extraordinarily distant from the Tuyotuki Islands to the west.

Their survival should have been extraordinary good fortune. Instead, it made them the most obvious suspects. Combined with existing Tuyotukian prejudices toward foreigners, the circumstances appeared damning unknown westerners had recently arrived; they had been present at Odaiba; the emperor and everyone around him had been slaughtered; and somehow they had survived.

The imperial authorities consequently identified the foreigners as the presumed

perpetrators of the massacre and the assassination of Daruma II. They were members of the expedition led by Fabio Sachs.

The Tuyotukian Civil War (December 1283-December 1284 A.R)

Following the assassination of Emperor Daruma II during the Sadness of the Garden in Winter, the political crisis within the Tuyotuki Islands developed almost immediately into open civil war.

What followed was not a conventional conflict between two opposing factions.Instead, the Tuyotukian Civil War became an increasingly complex war of all against all, as the principal clans, their allies, military organizations and competing descendants of Daruma II struggled for supremacy.

During the first months, recognizable alliances continued to exist. As the conflict intensified, however, these arrangements became increasingly temporary and unreliable. A clan that fought alongside another during one stage of the war could become its enemy shortly afterward. At its height, political allegiance had become so unstable that virtually no alliance could be considered permanent.

Nevertheless, the participants initially shared two broad objectives.

The first was control of the succession. Daruma II's numerous illegitimate descendants had provided several powerful clans with candidates possessing imperial blood. Consequently, the struggle was not merely over which faction would dominate the post-Daruma political order, but over which descendant of the dead emperor would occupy the throne.

The second objective was shared even by many otherwise hostile factions finding the person responsible for Daruma II's death. Initially, suspicion remained focused upon the recently arrived Western foreigners who had survived the massacre at Odaiba. They became convenient scapegoats.

Yet the destruction of the site had eliminated or damaged much of the available evidence, while the inability of Tuyotukian authorities to communicate effectively with the foreigners made determining what had actually happened extraordinarily difficult.

Almost nobody suspected the real architect of the assassination. Kumawakamaru, son of Daruma II's former right-hand man, possessed neither the apparent political position nor the expected motivations of someone attempting to overthrow the entire imperial system.

This was precisely because he had never intended to do so. His objective had been revenge.

While Tuyotuki descended into the chaos created by his conspiracy, the factions therefore began searching for perhaps the only individual whose reputation was sufficiently respected across political divisions to uncover the truth Hoseki.

The disappearance of Hoseki

There was one problem. Hoseki had disappeared. Unknown to almost everyone searching for her—and with only the surviving witchers of the School of the Dragon harboring suspicions about her true intentions—the famous elven geomancer had witnessed the opening stages of the civil war and reached a conclusion of her own.

She had seen enough. The human political order established after the Tsukierabi conquest had once again produced suffering on an enormous scale. Whatever peaceful life Hoseki had attempted to construct following her withdrawal from the Hyakki Yagyō could no longer reconcile her with what she witnessed around her.

She therefore abandoned it. But Hoseki did not return to the Hyakki Yagyō. Instead, she began searching for someone whose existence had, by the late 13th century, largely passed into legend Shinryū.

Her objective was nothing less than finding the ancient dragon and persuading him to intervene—to end human tyranny in the islands and, with it, the suffering she believed that tyranny continued to produce.

The search would consume almost an entire year. And during that year, Tuyotuki bled. By the time Hoseki approached the end of her journey, the islands had experienced destruction on a scale unprecedented even during the Tsukierabi conquest itself.

Yet neither Hoseki nor the warring clans could have anticipated that some of the individuals who would ultimately prove essential in preventing an even greater catastrophe were the very people initially blamed for beginning it the western foreigners.

The Survival of the Foreigners

The foreigners survived what appeared to be their inevitable fate. Having been

blamed for the death of Emperor Daruma II and the massacre at Odaiba, they were sentenced to be crucified over the course of several days. Before the sentence could bring about their deaths, however, they were rescued by the surviving witchers of the School of the Dragon.

In the aftermath of the emperor's assassination, the Dragons had decided to establish themselves as an independent faction in the developing civil war, remaining neutral toward all of its competing sides while conducting their own investigation into the identity of the true perpetrators. To them, it had become increasingly apparent that the foreigners were unlikely to have been responsible.

The reports concerning their activities and behavior since their arrival in the islands were simply too unusual and inconsistent with what would have been expected from the perpetrators of a carefully planned assassination of the emperor. Following their rescue, the expedition members were taken to the fortress of the School of the Dragon, where they were allowed to recover from their imprisonment and injuries.

Once sufficiently recovered, the foreigners entered into an alliance with the surviving Dragon witchers. The expedition initially disagreed with one important aspect of the Dragons' strategy: their reliance upon a single individual as their primary means of uncovering the truth. The witchers possessed several contingency plans—which would ultimately fail—but their principal objective was nevertheless identical to that pursued by virtually every major faction involved in the war finding Hoseki.

The Dragons believed that the renowned elven geomancer represented their best opportunity to determine who had actually orchestrated the assassination of Daruma II. Despite their reservations, the expedition eventually accepted the plan. Their circumstances left few realistic alternatives. They were trapped in an unfamiliar country, surrounded by factions that considered them murderers, and dependent upon one of the few organizations willing to entertain the possibility of their innocence.

Their alliance, however, immediately encountered another problem language. Communication between the western expedition and the Dragon witchers was initially extremely difficult.

Fortunately, the Dragons possessed their own naturally developed creole, used internally as a cant. Its grammar derived from the Nordling Common Tongue, while its vocabulary consisted approximately of 40% Nordling Common, 30%

Idaisa no gengo—frequently and incorrectly called Tuyotukian by foreigners—and 30% Zerrikanian.

This linguistic mixture ultimately provided the expedition with a bridge into communication with their rescuers. Among its members, Łukasz proved particularly adept at learning the Dragon creole. He acquired it faster than the others and eventually achieved the greatest fluency, frequently serving as the expedition's interpreter during the period in which they traveled alongside the witchers.

Overcoming the language barrier did not, however, solve the larger problem created by the rescue itself. From the perspective of the Tuyotukian authorities and the competing factions of the civil war, the School of the Dragon had just forcibly liberated the presumed perpetrators of both the assassination of Daruma II and the Sadness of the Garden in Winter.

The Dragons had transformed themselves overnight from a neutral organization investigating the emperor's death into apparent collaborators with his suspected assassins. Consequently, both the surviving witchers and the western expedition became wanted fugitives. For approximately the following year, they would be hunted across the Tuyotuki Islands.

The Expedition's Journey Through the Islands

"*And here I was thinking that being kidnapped by Putnam's pirate girlfriend had been the worst thing to happen during this expedition.*"
—Fabio Sachs

Thus began the expedition's journey across the Tuyotuki archipelago.

The expedition, led by the Temerian explorer Fabio Sachs on behalf of the Kingdom of Lyria and Rivia, had already traveled an extraordinary distance before reaching the islands.

It had spent nearly a year lost in the Korath Desert, where its members encountered several of the peoples inhabiting the region, some of whom ultimately joined the expedition. Later, in Haakland, the expedition managed to convince the Great Khan to end Redania's monopoly over silk trade in the western coast. This was achieved largely thanks to one of its members, the witcher Putnam Pitch, saving Prince Zeus—the future Great Khan whose reign would eventually lead to the formation of the Haaki Empire and the Haaki

invasion of the Northern Kingdoms in 1350.

From there, the expedition traveled through Zerrikania, where another member joined the group. During its passage through the region, it also assisted a rebellious Zerrikanian province—effectively an unrecognized state—in advancing its cause. The expedition subsequently visited the Aen Hagde kingdom of Oponskoye, becoming the first westerners encountered by its Hagde inhabitants in centuries. It then helped rid Eastern Barsa of assassins sent by Nilfgaard to destabilize the region.

Its journey continued through Hannu, where its members witnessed the enormous pyramids constructed in honor of the country's rulers, before proceeding to the mountainous kingdom of Buyan. There, the expedition was kidnapped by the pirate Kai Yih, who initially intended to sell its members into slavery. This situation changed considerably after Pitch began a romantic relationship with her, transforming the pirates from captors into allies. Together with a broader pirate coalition, the expedition subsequently participated in the overthrow of the tyranny then ruling Buyan.

Afterward, the group returned to Eastern Barsa before traveling to the city-state of Zerzura. There, they were enslaved. Their enslavement eventually contributed to the outbreak of a slave revolt which brought about the fall of Zerzura—or, at least, the fall of the city-state as it had previously existed. The expedition then continued into Bia Thin, reaching the kingdom of Ketu Rahu, and from there finally traveled to the Tuyotuki Islands.

Throughout this enormous journey, whenever circumstances permitted, Sachs and his companions also attempted to secure favorable commercial agreements for Lyria & Rivia. The expedition had, after all, been financed by the elderly Queen Meve, increasingly concerned with the future of her kingdom and seeking opportunities beyond the traditional political and economic sphere of the western coast.

By the time it reached Tuyotuki, the expedition was considerably different from the one that had originally departed. It had lost several members. It had also gained others.

At the beginning of its journey through the Tuyotuki Islands, its surviving principal members included Fabio Sachs, a former clerk in his youth, cartographer, scholar of Oxenfurt Academy, explorer, and later author; Putnam Pitch, a witcher of the School of the Griffin and future founder of the School of

the Crane; Istredd, mage, archaeologist, and Sachs's former professor; and D'yaebl, a witcheress of the School of the Cat, professional assassin, and one of the individuals partially responsible for the collapse of her own school, who had joined the expedition during its time in Zerzura and would later fall in the Tuyotuki Islands.

They were accompanied by Łukasz "The Lion of Temeria", one of the last witchers of the School of the Wolf and a future member of the School of the Dragon following its reconstruction, who had joined the expedition during its passage through Zerrikania; and Eberhatt of Rivia, a mage and medic who was secretly a lycanthrope, accompanied by six regularly paid dwarven mercenaries who served as a secondary means of containing him should it become necessary.

Among those who had joined the expedition during its earlier travels were two members of the Mardu people: the Explorer, so nicknamed because his native name proved impossible for Sachs and his companions to pronounce, and Monga. Both would later fall in the Tuyotuki Islands.

Other former members included Stucco Zangenis, a mage with a particular interest in genetics, who fell in Zerzura; Zavist, another mage, who fell in Ketu Rahu; Eberhatt's six dwarven mercenaries, who died at different stages of the journey; and Hira aen Hurashim, an Aen Manche desert elf with whom Pitch had developed a romantic relationship and who fell during the expedition's nearly year-long ordeal in the Korath.

The expedition had additionally included Kai Yih and her pirate crew on a temporary basis, although their participation ended following the events in Buyan.

It was this battered, constantly changing collection of explorers, scholars, mages, witchers, mercenaries and survivors that now found itself traveling through the Tuyotuki Islands—in the middle of a civil war, hunted as the supposed assassins of its emperor.

Tawalisi

"*What about Nabla back in Oponskoye? Doesn't she count? There seemed to be some chemistry between you two. Come to think of it, she could have been useful here—and Monga could have used the company, considering she was a diplomat.*"
—Fabio Sachs
"*Fabio, it was nice while it lasted. But I ruined whatever chance there might have*

been when I killed her without realizing she suffered from first-generation therianthropy and transformed into a werecat. No, she doesn't count. If we're talking about my love life, Kai probably could have helped us more, I'd say."
—Putnam Pitch

The expedition's journey through the Tuyotuki Islands naturally began on Tawalisi, where the surviving members remained alongside the witchers of the School of the Dragon while recovering from their imprisonment and near-execution.

Once sufficiently recovered, the expedition began traveling across the island together with the Dragons. Their first major involvement in the civil war occurred during the Battle of the Incline, when the expedition and the witchers helped defend a village from an attack by forces belonging to Clan Sanzu.

It was during the battle and its aftermath that they discovered that they were not alone in their search for Hoseki. News that the Dragon witchers had formed an independent, nominally neutral faction—and, more importantly, information concerning their objectives—had spread rapidly throughout the archipelago. Once it became known that the Dragons were searching for the almost legendary elven geomancer, several clans reached the same conclusion: if the witchers believed Hoseki could uncover the truth behind Daruma II's assassination, then finding her could prove decisive to their own interests.

Consequently, several competing clans began searching for Hoseki themselves. This transformed the search into yet another theater of the civil war. Although the Dragons remained neutral toward the competing claimants to the imperial throne, their objectives now frequently brought them into direct conflict with clan forces seeking to reach Hoseki first.

During the events surrounding the Battle of the Incline, Putnam Pitch also rescued a puppy from the fighting. He named the dog Frey. Frey subsequently became another member of the expedition.

Tawarisi

"*The landscape is beautiful. If we ignore the burned building and the smell of natural fertilizer, that is. It reminds me of the times I visited the outskirts of Vengerberg to get apple juice. Those were good days. Gods...*"
—Istredd

The expedition continued onward to Tawarisi, where it suffered its first major

setback since beginning its journey across the archipelago.

Several witchers of the School of the Dragon were abducted, forcing most of their surviving companions to organize a rescue operation. At the same time, the expedition began to have its first significant tangible impact upon the local population. Both D'yaebl and Putnam Pitch undertook a number of witcher contracts involving monsters and dangerous non-humans threatening communities throughout the island. Among the creatures they were forced to confront was a baku.

A Tuyotukian Onna-musha

Amid these encounters, the expedition managed to uncover two significant clues. The first was discovered with the assistance of the local population after the group resolved a problem involving an ubume. The clue concerned the mystery surrounding Emperor Daruma II's assassination. Shortly before the Sadness of the Garden in Winter, the training center belonging to the Onna-musha, the emperor's personal female guard, had been destroyed in a mysterious fire.

This discovery provided a plausible explanation for one of the most important unanswered questions surrounding the assassination: why had Daruma II been so poorly protected when he traveled to meet the Nilfgaardian ambassador?

The expedition concluded that news of the fire had likely reached the emperor shortly before his journey. Believing Odaiba and its port sufficiently secure, Daruma II apparently ordered the Onna-musha accompanying him to travel to Tawarisi, assist their sister warriors, and recover whatever could still be salvaged from the destroyed training center.

The decision inadvertently deprived the emperor of his principal personal protection at precisely the moment when his enemies were preparing to strike. The mysterious destruction of the Onna-musha training center therefore appeared increasingly unlikely to have been an unrelated accident.

The second clue emerged under considerably more gruesome circumstances. While investigating and clearing a battlefield infested with Tuyotukian ghouls, the expedition discovered a gravely wounded soldier among the remains. Before succumbing to his wounds, the soldier claimed to have seen the elven woman they were searching for.

His testimony remained vague, but provided the expedition with its first

meaningful indication of Hoseki's movements. She was no longer on Tawarisi. Instead, Hoseki appeared to be hiding—or at least traveling—among the ruins of ancient temples once dedicated to the worship of dragons.

Such sites had been forbidden for centuries. The old dragon cults had been outlawed and many of their temples destroyed, particularly following the development of emperor worship within the Tuyotukian religion, in which the imperial dynasty derived its sacred status from its descent from Daruma.

The discovery considerably narrowed the expedition's search. Unfortunately, it also transformed it into an enormous archaeological undertaking. No one knew which ruined temple Hoseki had visited, how many she intended to visit, or even whether the relevant site remained on Tawarisi. Finding her would therefore require systematically investigating the surviving ruins of ancient dragon cult sites throughout the archipelago.

The expedition and its Dragon allies divided into several groups. Łukasz traveled alongside Eberhatt and a group of Dragon witchers that included Faxicura and Jubei. His experiences alongside them during this period strengthened his growing affinity for the School of the Dragon and contributed substantially to his eventual decision to join the school following its reconstruction.

Putnam traveled with Fabio Sachs, D'yaebl, and Herardo, a Dragon witcher of mixed Nilfgaardian and Tuyotukian ancestry.

Additional search parties were organized under the leadership of Istredd and the expedition's Mardu members, respectively. The decision dramatically increased the territory they could investigate. It also left the smaller groups dangerously vulnerable.

During the search, the Mardu members of the expedition were eventually killed, Łukasz ended alone when the Dragon Witchers died due an Eberhatt´s transformation, Eberhatt also ended alone as well. Istredd would later experience a similar fate when every other member of his own group fell, leaving the mage with no one.

Despite their losses, none of the groups found Hoseki.

Instead, their exploration of the abandoned temples and surrounding ruins repeatedly exposed them to monsters, elaborate traps, and secrets buried for centuries that would perhaps have been better left undisturbed.

For Łukasz in particular, these experiences proved transformative. A complicated

series of events—including his involvement in clandestine fighting—brought him considerably closer to the Dragon witchers with whom he traveled. The bonds formed during this period would ultimately culminate in his decision to join the School of the Dragon by the end of the expedition.

Yet the immediate search remained unsuccessful. Hoseki was nowhere to be found.

What had begun as an investigation on Tawarisi therefore expanded into something considerably larger. If Hoseki was moving between ancient dragon temples, then limiting the search to a single island was no longer possible. Determined to find the elusive elf—and with her, potentially, the truth behind the death of Daruma II—the expedition and its Dragon allies extended their search across the entire archipelago.

From that point onward, they would travel from island to island, following the ruins left behind by the oldest layers of Tuyotuki's history.

The Rest of the Islands

"*What a strange cat. Still, I've always wanted to pet one, and the company is appreciated. I'm sure Frey will want to play with you. So... welcome aboard.*"
—Putnam Pitch, shortly after meeting Aiko

Following the conclusion of their search on Tawarisi, the expedition extended its journey across the rest of the Tuyotuki Islands.

Their passage through the archipelago was anything but tranquil. The expedition and its Dragon allies experienced numerous adventures and misadventures as they traveled from island to island, investigating the ruins of ancient dragon cults in their continuing search for Hoseki.

Yet monsters, ruins, traps, and the dangers of travel were not the principal source of their difficulties. Despite every attempt to avoid direct participation in the Tuyotukian Civil War and concentrate exclusively on finding Hoseki, the expedition repeatedly found itself drawn into the conflict. Beyond their already unpleasant introduction to the war, circumstances increasingly forced the foreigners and the Dragon witchers to intervene against the competing factions, effectively transforming them into an external force opposing whichever belligerent threatened them, local communities, or their immediate objectives.

The consequences became increasingly severe. Around February 1284, Herardo

was killed. Two months later, in April, the expedition suffered another major loss when D'yaebl was killed by an oni while saving the lives of Fabio Sachs and Putnam Pitch.

Her death immediately triggered yet another disaster. Taking advantage of the chaos caused by the oni attack, unknown forces abducted Sachs. Pitch was consequently left alone and forced to locate the scattered members of both the expedition and the School of the Dragon in order to organize the rescue of his friend.

Sachs had been captured by Clan Koryū, literally the *Ancient Clan*, so named because it was one of the oldest surviving clans in the islands. The clan intended to transform Sachs into a political instrument. As the presumed leader of the surviving foreigners still accused of assassinating Daruma II, his public execution could be presented as proof that Clan Koryū had avenged the emperor. The resulting prestige, they hoped, would strengthen the legitimacy of their own imperial claimant and improve their chances of placing that candidate upon the throne.

It was during this period of isolation that Putnam acquired two particularly unusual companions. The first initially appeared to be nothing more than an exceptionally fluffy orange cat. She was, in fact, a nekomata named Aiko. For reasons initially unclear to Pitch, Aiko decided to assist the witcher in his search. She would subsequently remain with the expedition throughout the rest of its time in the Tuyotuki Islands.

The second was Masako, an Onna-musha who likewise joined forces with him. According to later accounts, something romantic may have occurred between Masako and Pitch during this period. The exact nature of their relationship remains uncertain, having been attributed rather vaguely to "*cultural misunderstandings*." If such a relationship did occur, it may also have been connected to the emotional aftermath of D'yaebl's death, with both explanations potentially referring to different aspects of the same event. Whatever happened between them was never recorded with sufficient clarity to establish the matter conclusively.

With the expedition scattered, Sachs imprisoned, and several companions already dead, progress in the search for Hoseki slowed considerably. Pitch and his new allies first had to reunite the surviving members of the expedition and locate their scattered Dragon companions while simultaneously preparing to

rescue Sachs. Doing so involved an increasingly convoluted series of events across the islands. Nevertheless, progress continued.

The expedition gradually acquired new allies, several of whom proved instrumental in overcoming the obstacles before them. One became particularly important. During their travels, a samebito saved Putnam from drowning. The expedition subsequently discovered that this samebito was a close friend of Hoseki and possessed information concerning the elf's movements.

For the first time, they obtained a clue pointing toward her definitive location. Hoseki was on Kami. More importantly, the samebito revealed what she was actually searching for. Hoseki was pursuing one of the beings that Istredd would later introduce to Nordling scholarship as the eastern dragons. The particular dragon she sought was known by two names depending upon the people speaking of him Shenlong—or Shinryū.

Meanwhile, Masako succeeded in carrying out a political maneuver that ultimately secured Sachs's release from Clan Koryū and reunited him with Putnam.

Aiko proved equally important. After Pitch helped resolve a longstanding dispute between her people and another non-human group, Aiko was able to mobilize a network of nekomata and bakeneko across the islands. Through this network, the scattered surviving members of the expedition were eventually located and reunited with Sachs and Pitch.

The nekomata and bakeneko subsequently joined the broader alliance surrounding the expedition and the School of the Dragon, remaining associated with it until the westerners finally departed the Tuyotuki Islands.

With Sachs rescued, the surviving expedition reunited, and Hoseki's destination finally known, their months-long search had at last acquired a definitive objective. They had begun by searching blindly through the ruins of forgotten dragon cults scattered across an entire archipelago.

Now they knew exactly where they had to go. Kami. And they finally understood why Hoseki had disappeared in the first place. She was not hiding from the civil war. She was looking for Shinryū.

The Last Island

“*A terrible fall, that poor woman's. I wouldn't wish it upon anyone.*”

—Fabio Sachs to Putnam Pitch following Tanla's death

With the surviving members of the expedition and the School of the Dragon finally reunited, their search for Hoseki entered its final stage. The information provided by the samebito proved to have been only partially correct.

Hoseki was indeed somewhere in Kami—but not on the island bearing that name. The confusion arose from the fact that the wider region was likewise rendered as *Kami* when written using alphabets other than the Tuyotukian script, despite being pronounced differently in the native language as Cānnį. This misunderstanding initially sent the expedition in the wrong direction and inadvertently drew them into a series of events surrounding the Palace of Spiritual Ascension, where they expected to find Hoseki.

She was not there. Further investigation eventually led them instead to the island of Sōtenkyō. There, near the coast, stood the extinct volcano of Usu. Hidden beneath it was an underground lake containing the ruins of an ancient site constructed by the Aen Hagde elves centuries earlier, when they discovered that a Ley Line passed through the area and transformed it into a Place of Power.

The location was also associated with an ancient tradition concerning the eastern dragon known as Shenlong, or Shinryū. According to surviving accounts, Usu had been the last place where the dragon had been reliably reported before his disappearance. Centuries had passed since then, however, and no one knew whether the tradition remained accurate.

More importantly, virtually no one had considered the possibility that Shinryū had never actually left the area. He had simply gone to sleep within the volcano.

It was there, in November 1284, that the expedition finally located Hoseki. Reaching her, however, required one final confrontation. Knowing that others might eventually discover her whereabouts, Hoseki had persuaded surviving members of the ancient non-human paramilitary organization she had once led, the Hyakki Yagyō, to protect the area and prevent anyone from reaching her.

The resulting confrontation became known as the Battle for the Dawn. As its later name suggested, the battle took place at dawn, with the decisive fighting occurring upon the Golden Bridge, where the expedition and the Dragon witchers were forced to confront the non-human defenders barring their route toward Usu.

After overcoming this final obstacle, the expedition and the surviving Dragons at

last reached Hoseki. Their encounter was complicated from the beginning.

Hoseki already knew several of the Dragon witchers accompanying the expedition. Some had been among those responsible for sparing her life years earlier, allowing her to abandon the Hyakki Yagyō and disappear into what appeared to be the peaceful existence of a renowned elven geomancer. Over time, she had even developed something resembling friendship with some of them. That familiarity did little to reassure her. Hoseki quickly understood why they had come. And she had no intention of cooperating.

She also possessed some prior knowledge of Putnam Pitch, although she had never met him personally. What she knew came entirely from stories and rumors that had reached her during his travels through the islands—particularly those associated with the nickname by which he had increasingly become known.

Thus, after almost an entire year of searching, the expedition finally stood before the woman whom virtually every major faction in the Tuyotukian Civil War had been attempting to find. They had reached Hoseki. But finding her and convincing her to help them were about to prove two very different problems.

The End of the War

"*Just wait until I tell Erin about all of this. You should come by sometime, see the children. Be their uncle for a while.*"
—Fabio Sachs
"*Fabio, we still have a very long journey ahead of us. Pray she doesn't ask for a divorce when you finally get home.*"
—Putnam Pitch

The confrontation that followed was not primarily a physical one, but a battle of words.

The expedition and the Dragon witchers attempted to persuade Hoseki to abandon her intentions, relying partly upon the suspicions previously shared with them by the samebito. Although his information regarding Hoseki's precise location had proven inaccurate, his speculation concerning her ultimate objective was unfortunately correct. Their arrival had also been extraordinarily well timed.

After centuries of uninterrupted slumber, Hoseki's offerings, prayers, and presence at the ancient place of power had finally begun to awaken Shinryū. The dragon had slept beneath Usu since long before the rise of modern Tuyotuki. In

the centuries since his disappearance, humans had ceased worshipping him and the remaining dragons, gradually replacing those traditions with devotion to the emperor and the imperial dynasty—developments of which Shinryū himself remained largely unaware.

Before the dragon fully awakened, however, Hoseki defended the purpose for which she had sought him. In her view, humans had repeatedly demonstrated that they knew only how to destroy. Wherever they established themselves, places that had once flourished eventually deteriorated through conquest, exploitation, violence, and division. To Hoseki, the Tuyotuki Islands themselves represented the clearest possible example. She therefore believed that humanity's eradication through Shinryū's power was not merely justified, but necessary.

The expedition rejected her conclusion. They did not deny humanity's capacity for cruelty. Nor did they attempt to argue that humans learned quickly from their mistakes. Their own journey had provided more than enough evidence to the contrary.

Instead, they argued that destruction represented only part of humanity's potential. Humans could also create things of extraordinary beauty. They could change, learn, cooperate, and construct societies capable of accommodating those different from themselves. Humanity could destroy paradises—but it could also build them.

As the argument continued, the enormous form beneath the ruins began to move. Shinryū awakened. The ancient dragon listened to both sides before passing judgment. Through his magic, Shinryū perceived something of the thoughts, emotions, fears, desires, and intentions of those gathered before him. What he found offered no simple vindication of either position.

Human beings were unquestionably capable of extraordinary destruction. But they were equally capable of choosing otherwise. Among those present, Putnam Pitch provided Shinryū with a particularly useful example. His long and deeply imperfect journey contained acts of violence, failure, compassion, sacrifice, selfishness, loyalty, and change. To the dragon, the witcher represented in miniature precisely what Hoseki refused to accept about humanity its contradictions did not make improvement impossible.

Shinryū therefore rejected her proposed extermination. He argued that the capacity to destroy existed alongside the capacity to create, and that neither

could be understood without acknowledging the importance of individual choice. Humans could repeat their mistakes, but they could also recognize them, learn from them, and choose to act differently.

Hoseki remained deeply disappointed. For years, and particularly during the Civil War, she had increasingly convinced herself that removing humanity entirely represented the only possible means of ending the cycle she had witnessed.

Yet Shinryū's judgment introduced doubt into that certainty. If a being who had witnessed the rise and fall of several civilizations, suffered human and non-human cruelty alike, and lived for centuries could still believe that change remained possible, perhaps her conclusion had been premature.

Shinryū gave her one final instruction help them. He assured Hoseki that she would soon have the opportunity to witness the truth of his argument for herself. Then the dragon departed Usu. He flew away from the Tuyotuki Islands and was never reliably seen there again.

Trusting his judgment, Hoseki agreed to accompany the expedition. The foreigners, the surviving Dragon witchers, and the elven geomancer subsequently left the Kami region and traveled to Okami, the city founded following the vassalization of the Okami and home to the port of Odaiba—not to be confused with the Okami Islands themselves.

Their destination was the site where Daruma II had been assassinated almost one year earlier. There, Hoseki could finally employ her abilities as a geomancer to reconstruct what had occurred during the Sadness of the Garden in Winter.

It did not take long. Hoseki's investigation revealed that the attack responsible for both the massacre and the death of Daruma II had been carried out by forces connected to a shinobi clan operating under Kumawakamaru.

The motive was revenge. Kumawakamaru's father had served as Daruma II's trusted right-hand man and had previously held considerable authority before allegations of corruption led the emperor to order his execution. Convinced that his father had been unjustly used as a scapegoat, Kumawakamaru had sought revenge against the emperor.

His actions had ultimately produced consequences far beyond anything he had intended. Armed with evidence obtained through Hoseki's geomancy and the investigation conducted throughout the preceding year, the expedition and its

allies presented their findings to the governing regency. The evidence was sufficient. A warrant was immediately issued for Kumawakamaru and the members of the shinobi clan associated with him. The regency subsequently transmitted the findings to the competing clans across the archipelago.

The effect was almost immediate. For nearly a year, the clans had fought one another while simultaneously searching for those responsible for the emperor's assassination. Now, for the first time, they possessed a common enemy supported by credible evidence.

Hostilities rapidly ceased. The competing clans temporarily united their forces and cooperated in the search for Kumawakamaru and his remaining allies. They were captured soon afterward. Following interrogation and judgment, Kumawakamaru and the principal perpetrators of the conspiracy were executed.

The Tuyotukian Civil War was over. For the western expedition, the revelation completely reversed its position within Tuyotukian society. The foreigners who had entered the conflict condemned as the assassins of Daruma II had ultimately helped identify his actual killers and played a decisive role in ending the war caused by his death. Their names were cleared. Their honor was formally restored.

The Tuyotukian authorities expressed their gratitude and granted the expedition a substantial reward in recognition of its role in restoring peace. Sachs nevertheless attempted to extract one final benefit for the kingdom that had financed his journey: a new commercial treaty between the Tuyotuki Empire and Lyria and Rivia. The attempt failed.

Even so, the expedition had achieved something that could prove almost equally valuable in the future. Tuyotuki was no longer an unknown territory to the Northern Kingdoms. Its location, political structure, peoples, resources, and possible routes of access had now been documented. Future Lyrian and Rivian merchants, diplomats, or explorers could potentially build upon what Sachs and his companions had begun.

Within several weeks of the end of the war, the Tuyotukian ports reopened to international traffic. Foreign vessels returned, and maritime trade and cultural exchange gradually resumed. The expedition likewise prepared to leave.

Through the friendships they had established during their travels, they secured passage aboard a Nilfgaardian vessel whose captain had become acquainted with them and began the enormous journey back toward the Northern

Kingdoms. They departed carrying the accumulated results of years of travel: firsthand accounts of distant societies, maps and geographical knowledge, valuable objects acquired throughout the Far East, and the commercial agreements successfully negotiated on behalf of Lyria and Rivia.

Their departure from Tuyotuki therefore marked the conclusion of Fabio Sachs's first planned expedition. Its consequences would extend far beyond the expedition itself. For the Nordlings, Sachs and his companions had helped illuminate enormous portions of a world previously known primarily through rumor, fragmented trade networks, ancient accounts, and speculation. Their records substantially expanded western knowledge of the peoples, states, cultures, and geography beyond the familiar world of the Northern Kingdoms.

Yet not every surviving member of the expedition departed Tuyotuki. Łukasz "The Lion of Temeria" remained behind. Having already witnessed the effective extinction of the School of the Wolf and possessing little that still tied him to the western coast, Łukasz saw no reason to return.

During the Civil War, he had fought alongside the witchers of the School of the Dragon, learned their creole, shared their losses, and gradually become integrated into their surviving community. The Dragons themselves had emerged from the conflict transformed. Their actions during the war restored much of the reputation they had lost during the earlier collapse of their school, but their numbers remained dangerously low. Reconstruction required new witchers and experienced members capable of helping rebuild what had been lost. Łukasz chose to become one of them.

Thus, while Fabio Sachs and the surviving members of his expedition began their journey westward, one of the last witchers of the School of the Wolf remained in the Far East. There, he would become a witcher of the School of the Dragon.

Post-War Tuyotuki (1284–1290s A.R)

"*Do you think our Wolf will be alright? It's strange not having the two of you arguing over who was stricter, Old Keldar or Vesemir, or whether it's better to kill a ghoul with a cut from the right or the left.*"
—Fabio Sachs to Putnam Pitch, shortly before arriving in Sabana
"*Fabio. Keldar. Definitely Keldar. I never met this Vesemir fellow, but getting smacked on the head with the Liber Tenebrarum as a child because you got something wrong can't possibly be good for you. My head hurts just thinking about*

it. Good night."
—Putnam Pitch to Fabio Sachs, shortly before arriving in Sabana

In the aftermath of the expedition's departure, the Tuyotuki Islands underwent a significant political transformation.

The death of Daruma II, followed by an entire year of civil war fought partly over competing descendants of the imperial family, had severely damaged confidence in the existing mechanism of succession. As an immediate response to the crisis, the empire temporarily adopted a system of elective monarchy, allowing a new ruler—and potentially a new ruling dynasty—to be selected in the hope of restoring stability and preventing another succession conflict.

The experiment proved remarkably brief. The principal figure to emerge from the elective period was Yasuke, the favored son of Daruma II. Yasuke was a Sankōjin, and had been named after the famous Zangvebarian samurai of the same name, partly in reference to his complexion and the ease with which his skin darkened under exposure to the sun. He was married to Yi Bogsung-a, a princess of the Kingdom of Deulagon, located on the Asatta Peninsula. She would become considerably better known in later Tuyotukian historiography under the name Hatsumomo. Together, Yasuke and Hatsumomo established the True Moon Dynasty.

Rather than representing a complete break with the previous imperial house, the new dynasty constituted a cadet branch of it. It therefore presented itself—and was ultimately accepted—as the legitimate continuation and successor of the dynasty descended from Daruma.

The elective system consequently disappeared almost as quickly as it had been introduced. Popular pressure following the Civil War strongly favored a return to hereditary succession. After a year in which rival descendants of Daruma had provided competing clans with claims around which to wage war, many Tuyotukians feared that a permanent elective monarchy would merely institutionalize the conditions capable of producing another such conflict.

From the perspective of a society in which order represented the supreme social value, the possibility of regularly contested imperial elections increasingly appeared less as a safeguard against future crises and more as a mechanism through which those crises could repeatedly emerge. A subsequent series of natural disasters further simplified the succession question when Yasuke's surviving half-brothers died during the catastrophes.

By the 1290s, the brief experiment with elective monarchy had therefore ended. The empire had returned to hereditary rule, but under a new branch of the imperial family the True Moon Dynasty.

The Reconstruction (1290s–1310s A.R)

Following the Civil War, the Tuyotuki Islands were left severely weakened. The devastation caused by the conflict was compounded by a succession of natural disasters of varying kinds, leaving considerable damage throughout the archipelago.

The period that followed would therefore become appropriately known as the Reconstruction. For approximately twenty years, Emperor Yasuke and Empress Hatsumomo devoted much of their reign to rebuilding the nation. In some respects, their policies echoed those pursued centuries earlier by Tadashiro and, during the first stage of his reign, Takemaru. Unlike those earlier periods, however, reconstruction and foreign engagement were not clearly separated into distinct phases. Instead, both developed simultaneously and with considerably greater intensity.

This became particularly evident in Tuyotuki's renewed engagement with the outside world. The empire had emerged from the Civil War militarily and economically weakened, creating fears that foreign powers might attempt to exploit its temporary vulnerability. The imperial government therefore sought new allies abroad while simultaneously attempting to secure the wealth necessary to finance reconstruction through expanded international trade.

These objectives produced an unprecedented wave of maritime exploration. Tuyotukian sailors, merchants, cartographers, and diplomatic missions traveled extensively along the Eastern Coast, establishing contacts, charting maritime routes, and documenting territories on a scale never previously attempted by the empire.

Beginning as far south as Krantak••E, their voyages passed through places already familiar to the Tuyotukians, such as Ketu Rahu, before continuing increasingly farther north. Eventually, Tuyotukian expeditions reached as far as Kwanland, in the Far North.

By the end of the period, virtually the entirety of the Eastern Coast had been mapped by Tuyotukian explorers. The scale of these expeditions became so significant that later historians would give the Reconstruction another name The

Great Age of Exploration.

The Voyages West and the Second Empire (1310s–1380s A.R)

The Reconstruction was followed by a period of relative continuity in Tuyotukian foreign policy. Rather than abandoning the maritime and diplomatic expansion of the preceding decades, successive governments continued to broaden the geographical horizons of the empire.

Tuyotukian sailors eventually traveled as far west as Thaimi and, on occasion, reached the southernmost territories of the already familiar Nilfgaardian Empire.

These increasingly distant voyages eventually produced a new objective. Nilfgaard had maintained generally friendly relations with Tuyotuki since the first sustained contact between East and West in the Sundalaic Islands. However, the enormous distances involved made direct contact and commerce difficult. Tuyotukian navigators therefore began searching for a more efficient maritime route to their distant "friends."

Rather than continuing to follow the known routes across the Old Continent and its surrounding seas, they attempted something considerably more ambitious reaching Nilfgaard by sailing around the globe. These expeditions coincided with a profound transformation occurring elsewhere in the world. By then, Nilfgaard had confirmed that the claims surrounding the final expedition of the Temerian explorer Fabio Sachs had not been a myth invented by the "*barbarian*" Nordlings. There truly was land beyond the Great Sea a landmass that would become known as the Western Continent.

Its discovery initiated a new phase of Nilfgaardian expansion and, in response, the beginning of the Nordling colonial period. Seeking to prevent Nilfgaard from monopolizing the newly discovered lands, several Northern powers established the Confederation of Nordling Colonies known as Fabiola, allowing them to compete collectively with the Empire in the New World.

Nilfgaard, the Northern Kingdoms, and Zangvebar initially reached and established themselves along the eastern coast of the Western Continent. The Tuyotukians arrived from the opposite direction. Having crossed the ocean westward from their own side of the world, Tuyotukian navigators eventually reached the northern reaches of the new continent's western coast.

Their arrival bore an uncanny resemblance to the legendary arrival of the

Tsukierabi in the Tuyotuki Islands centuries earlier. As the expedition approached the unknown coast, the navigators saw moonlight reflected across the distant waters. Mistaking the reflection for the land itself, they initially believed that their extraordinary voyage had somehow brought them to the Moon.

They therefore named the newly encountered territory *Shiroi Tsuki* (白い月), the White Moon. The name would later be corrupted by foreigners into Shirotuki. The Tuyotukians soon discovered, of course, that they had not reached the Moon. They had reached an entirely new part of the world.

Once the nature and extent of their discovery became apparent, Tuyotuki began establishing settlements along the newly encountered coast. What had begun as an attempt to find a shorter route to Nilfgaard consequently transformed into a sustained colonial project.

From this expansion emerged what later historians would call the Second Tuyotukian Empire. Unlike the First Empire, whose power had been concentrated primarily throughout the eastern coast, Bia Thin, the Chain, and neighboring regions, the Second Empire developed around Tuyotukian possessions in the Western Continent, with Shirotuki becoming the principal expression of Tuyotukian colonial power in the New World.

The Tuyotukians were not alone for long. Over the following centuries, their territorial expansion gradually brought them into contact with the colonial possessions established by Nilfgaard, the Northern Kingdoms and Zangvebar, operating from the opposite coast. As the different colonial systems expanded inland and along the continent's coasts, their respective spheres of influence eventually encountered one another.

Expansion could no longer proceed indefinitely. The territorial growth of each colonial power increasingly became constrained by the presence of the others, establishing new political frontiers and transforming the Western Continent into another arena of competition between the great powers of the known world.

Distant Future

In the distant future, the prophecy of the elven seer Ithlinne would ultimately come to pass, as the climatic catastrophe known as the White Frost engulfed much of the Northern Hemisphere. The Tuyotuki Islands, however, suffered a considerably different fate.

Rather than being consumed by the advancing cold, the archipelago underwent a profound climatic transformation. Its formerly tropical and subtropical environments gradually disappeared, eventually giving way to a predominantly temperate oceanic climate. Whether any recognizable civilization still existed on the islands by that distant period remains unknown. No reliable accounts survive to establish whether the descendants of the Tuyotukians—or any of the numerous human and non-human peoples who had inhabited the archipelago throughout its history—endured long enough to witness this transformation.

Yet, in a certain sense, the fate of the islands gave an unexpected final resonance to one of the oldest beliefs of modern Tuyotukian civilization. For centuries, the followers of Tsuyoi tsuki no otoko, *the Man of the Strong Moon*, had regarded the islands as a land placed under his guidance and protection.

When the White Frost finally transformed much of the known world, the Tuyotuki Islands were changed, but not consumed. Thus, whether through divine protection, geographical fortune, or simple coincidence, it could perhaps be said that the Tuyotukians had been right about one thing after all the islands truly were blessed by the *Man of the Strong Moon*.

Borders

As an island nation, the Tuyotuki Islands share no land borders with any other territory, being surrounded entirely by seas: the Tuyotukian Sea to the west and the appropriately named East Sea to the east.

Several territories nevertheless lie relatively close to the archipelago by sea. These include the Gubakuni Archipelago to the south and the Sundalaic Islands to the west, as well as the islands of Páhou and Mu to the north.

On the continental mainland, Aunakeal lies to the west, while outside of it, farther north lies the southern portion of the region known as the Chain, referred to by the Tuyotukians as Tōsenkoku (島千国), *The Thousand-Island Lands*.

During the islands periods as a imperial power, however, Tuyotukian borders extended considerably beyond the archipelago itself.

The First Tuyotukian Empire shared borders with several territories of Bia Thin and the Second Tuyotukian Empire, specifically through its possessions on the Western Continent, bordered terra incognita to the north, the Lunar Sea to the

west, and the region known as the Plains to the south.

Underwater Borders

"*Life, and the turns it takes. At the beginning of my career as a witcher, I killed a shark-like monster in Skellige, and almost ten years later, a being that may have been related to it ended up saving my life*"
—Putnam Pitch, during an interview conducted by Fabio Sachs for Chronicles of the Far East on their journey home, Volume X, Chapter XIV, page 260

The Tuyotuki Islands share two underwater borders with non-human territories. In the Tuyotukian Sea, they border the samebitos, often incorrectly referred to as *shark people*, as the term is far too simplistic. In the East Sea, they border the East Sea Civilization, originally a colonizing branch of the merpeople's Great Sea Civilization that separated from it for unknown reasons.

The samebitos and the East Sea Civilization were once allies, but they have been at odds since the emergence of the wozous. The samebito believe that the wozous' efforts are futile and that they are merely polluting the sea, and are willing to find them a new land in which to settle. The East Sea Civilization, meanwhile, supports the wozous in their efforts to achieve victory and thereby stop polluting the sea.

Climate

The climate of the Tuyotuki Islands can generally be described as ranging from tropical—including tropical rainforest, monsoon, and dry climates—to subtropical. However, due to the geography of the islands, other climates are also present, accompanied by microclimates depending on the region of the island being visited at any given time.

Fauna and Flora

"*No, Putnam. You already adopted that puppy after running into a burning house to play the hero. I'm not letting you adopt one of those weird monkeys*"
—Words of Fabio Sachs recorded in Chronicles of the Far East: The Discarded Material, expanded edition of 1323

Leaving aside the creatures that arrived through the Conjunctions, the Tuyotuki Islands possess a combination of the fauna and flora typically associated with tropical and subtropical climates, together with species also found throughout the Gubakuni Islands and the Sundalaic Islands.

Together, these three archipelagos form a distinct ecological region, sharing part of their flora and fauna while simultaneously possessing a high degree of endemism produced by centuries of geographical isolation.

Two notable examples of Tuyotukian endemic species are the moon tree (Neodracaena draco) and the salt glider (Aquapetaurus breviceps).

Tuyotukian flora as sketched by Fabio Sachs

Demographics

Tuyotukian city in the coastal sketch

The total population of the Tuyotuki Islands is estimated at between 15 and 25 million inhabitants, with Teien being, unsurprisingly, the most populous island. Most of the population is rural, resulting in a generally low population density, with the four main islands being the exception.

Around 85% of the population belongs to the ethnic groups native to the territory, excluding those of mixed foreign ancestry. Another 5% consists of people of mixed foreign ancestry, 5% of assimilated non-humans, and the remaining 5% of foreigners.

Ethnic Groups

Excluding the vast number of ethnic groups that formed part of the First Empire—which brought its composition close to that of the Melukkan Peninsula, with around 500 in total—the islands themselves are home to around ten.

These include humans of non-human ancestry, characterized by orange skin, as most are quadroons of Aen Hagde elves; native Tuyotukans, characterized by varying degrees of tanned skin and almond-shaped eyes; those of mixed native and non-native ancestry; non-native Tuyotukans, characterized by varying degrees of white skin and almond-shaped eyes; those of mixed native and non-human ancestry; those of mixed non-native and non-human ancestry; and those of mixed non-human, native, and non-native ancestry, the latter being among the rarest

groups.

Rarer still are those of mixed native and foreign ancestry, non-human and foreign ancestry, non-native and foreign ancestry, as well as any combination of all these groups with foreigners—redundantly enough, with foreigners.

List of Ethnic Groups

1. Akabito (赤人): Literally, *red/orange-skinned people*. Those of Aen Hagde ancestry.
2. Sankōjin (三光人): Literally, *people of the three lights*. Those of native, non-native, and elven ancestry.
3. Kasanebito (重ね人): Literally, *people of the layers/strata*. Those of mixed native and non-native ancestry; that is, descendants of both Tsukierabi and Sajibito.
4. Sajibito (先時人): Literally, *people of the time before* or *people of the previous era*. The native Tuyotukians.
5. Tsukierabi (月選人): Literally, *people chosen by the Moon*. The non-native Tuyotukians.
6. Manseitō (万成徒): Literally, *people of the ten thousand essences* or *those formed from everything*. Those of native, non-native, elven, and foreign ancestry.
7. Sakatabito (境田人): Literally, *people of the border*. Those of native and foreign ancestry.
8. Gaihō-shu (外邦衆): Literally, *those of the lineage of the outer lands*. Those of mixed Tuyotukian and foreign ancestry.
9. Kibito (黄人): Literally, *yellow people*. Those of elven and foreign ancestry.
10. Yakubito (約人): Literally, *people of the pact*. Those of Tsukierabi and foreign ancestry.

Groups Present but Not Recognized in Official Records

- Toraijin (渡来人): Literally, people who crossed the sea. Essentially, foreigners.

Phenotypes

"*You're the one who's married—to a literally blind woman, whom you got pregnant before leaving for the other side of the world—not me, Fabio. So stop*

tchbyFabioSachs

staring, or you're getting smacked on the head on her behalf. Poor Erin must be wondering whether you're still alive, whether you're alright, and about a hundred bloody things besides."
—Putnam Pitch to Fabio Sachs, recorded by Istredd in Travels Beyond the Blue Mountains, 1293 edition

The Tuyotuki Islands display considerable phenotypic diversity as a consequence of their multiethnic population. Nevertheless, several traits are particularly common, appearing not only within specific ethnic groups but recurring across several of them.

One of the most notable is the prevalence of light-colored eyes, although their particular shades and pigmentation vary between populations.

The Sajibito, for example, commonly possess colors such as blue and similar lighter hues, but generally in comparatively dark or muted shades, associated with their greater overall melanin levels. The Tsukierabi, by contrast, tend toward lighter colors expressed in considerably brighter shades, such as aquamarine blue.

Another widespread characteristic is black or dark-brown hair, commonly displaying wavy or curly textures. Wavy hair should not be confused with curly hair, as both occur independently throughout the islands. Sajibito hair, for instance, tends to be strongly curled, although generally not to the degree commonly found among Zangvebarians and several other peoples of the Far South.

Finally, the various Tuyotukian populations generally display comparatively short stature. Exact average height differs according to ethnic group, nutrition and social circumstances, but all populations exhibit some degree of insular dwarfism.

None of these characteristics should be understood as universal.

Straight hair and brown eyes, for example, are also naturally present among Tuyotukan populations. They are simply considerably less common—in roughly the same way that wavy hair or blue eyes may be comparatively uncommon in other lands.

Geography

The geography of the Tuyotuki Islands is so varied that it cannot be defined in broad terms. In this regard, each island is, to some extent, unique. For example, Teien is flat in the south and gradually rises in elevation as one travels north, while Kazazei is entirely flat and Takami consists entirely of a plateau.

Magical Orography

Like the rest of the planet, the Tuyotuki Islands are traversed by Ley Lines. However, they possess one particular characteristic: each island is crossed by a specific type of Ley Line corresponding to one of the four elements—Water, Fire, Earth, and Air—as Ether manifests differently within the world.

Alongside these are Ley Lines associated with their respective related para-elements. As a result, the magical landscape of each island is highly distinctive, as is the type of magic that magic users are able to employ there.

Number of Islands

"*Fabio does not mention it because he wants to preserve his credibility, but we once saw a flying whale on fire in Kojima. Yes, you read that correctly. That happened*"
—Edition of Volume X of Chronicles of the Far East, with annotations by the witcher Putnam Pitch, Sachs's best friend and companion throughout all his expeditions

The archipelago consists of four main islands, seven secondary islands to the north, and three secondary islands to the south. That is, a total of fourteen islands.

1. Tawalisi: One of the main islands. The name is of native origin, but its meaning was lost over time. It serves as the cultural center of the country.
2. Tawarisi: A secondary island. The same happened with its name as with Tawalisi. The island is known for being the breadbasket of the Tuyotuki Islands, though not their garden.
3. Kami (神): Named for being the island where the non-native Tuyotukans first arrived and received enlightenment from their god. It is also the religious island par excellence and the place where the diffuse monotheism of their originally monotheistic religion first developed. Despite this, it is not one of the main islands, but rather another secondary one.
4. Teien (庭園): Literally, *garden*. The principal island of the Tuyotuki Islands,

named for two reasons: its beauty, and because it was the island that had to be "*cleansed*" of non-humans the most. Much like an abandoned garden, even if beautiful, still requires maintenance.

5. Sōtenkyō (蒼天境): Literally, *Realm Beneath the Blue Heavens*. The third main island. Famous for its geography, particularly volcanoes such as Usu, and its sunny climate.
6. Kojima (小島): Literally, *small island*. Notable for being precisely that—the smallest island in the archipelago—as well as the place where, according to Tuyotukians from other islands, the strangest things tend to happen.
7. Kin no Sanchi (金の産地): The fourth main island. Literally, *place of origin of gold*. As its name suggests, it is where gold is extracted in the Tuyotuki Islands, although other metals are mined there as well. It is also known for its open-pit mines, the Tuyotukians' preferred method of mining.
8. Tsukishima (月島): Literally, *moon island*. A secondary island by size that was once politically a main island, as it was where the capital was located, until Teien was completely "*cleansed*."
9. Kazazei (風勢): Another secondary island. Literally, *force of the wind*. Located in the south, it is a flat island where the southern winds blow strongly. It is used by the nobility as a retreat during the dry season due to the cooling effect of these winds.
10. Qajashi: Another secondary island with a native name whose meaning has been lost. It is the main port for ships arriving from the central region of Bia Thin.
11. Takami (高み): Literally, *elevated place*. It was named as such because the entire island consists of a plateau. It should not be confused with Sōtenkyō, as it lacks the latter's varied geography.
12. Daruma (達磨): An island named in honor of the prophet of the god of the Tuyotukian religion and founder of the royal dynasty that rules the islands. It was given his name because it was his favorite place in the archipelago.
13. Okiguni (沖国): Literally, *offshore land*. The name given to one of the secondary islands, whose most notable characteristic is that it is the most remote island in the entire archipelago.
14. Kamori (香森): Literally, *fragrant forest*, named for being the island with the greatest abundance of aromatic plants in the entire archipelago. Most are endemic and belong to the rainforest ecosystem.

International Relations

Although Zangvebarian, Melukkan, and Zerrikanian merchants have reached the islands, the international relations of the Tuyotuki Islands are primarily focused on the eastern coast.

These relations range from very positive with the nearest regions, to neutral with those at intermediate distances, poor or tense with more distant regions, and then back to very positive with extremely distant ones. An example of poor or tense relations can be found in the Okami Islands, due to their shared history.

It is worth noting that countries such as the very distant Zangvebar, as well as the comparatively closer Zerrikania, attempted to establish embassies in the country, but only Zerrikania succeeded. The Zangvebarian delegation suffered the consequences of the earthquake that struck Teien in the 1260s, with all of its diplomats being killed.

Influence of the Tuyotukian Culture and influences on the Tuyotukian Culture

Despite the various invasion attempts not unfolding as the Tuyotukian emperors might have desired, Tuyotukian culture left an enduring mark in the East. Nevertheless, the Tuyotukians were not immune to the influence of other cultures during this process.

In terms of their influence, several noteworthy examples can be highlighted. Artistically, they indirectly sparked a movement in ceramics when continentals adopted the kintsugi technique. This practice even reached Zerrikania, evolving into the famous golden tattoos of Zerrikanian warriors. Additionally, a form of drawings with stories made on papyrus for military and religious propaganda, known as manga, gave rise to the mangwa of the Assata peninsula, serving similar functions. Furthermore, the exportation of the religion that Daruma brought to the Tuyotuki islands to Bia Thin resulted in the development of various religious currents.

Economically, the trade routes established during the Tuyotukian era became vital arteries connecting distant parts of their Bia Thin inland territories. This facilitated the exchange of goods and ideas, fostering a cross-cultural exchange that persisted even after Tuyotukian control waned.

In administration, Tuyotukian influence extended to the Ketu Rahu way of

management, a legacy that the kingdom maintained even after gaining independence from the First Tuyotukian Empire.

In the military aspect, while the Tuyotukians did not influence in the same way that Nilfgaard would with the Tuyotuki Islands, they did make an impact. As mentioned earlier, the Nilfgaardian Secret Service, for instance, adopted the orions used by the shinobis of the Tuyotuki Islands as one of their preferred weapons.

On the other hand, regarding what influenced them, the adoption of Asatta's hwando, replacing the traditional Tuyotukian katana due to its greater effectiveness, and the acquisition of new military land techniques learned from Nilfgaardian soldiers after both empires made formal contact and agreed to expel the Sundalaic government stand out. Notably, this type of sword found its way into the arsenal of the School of the Dragon Witchers, replacing their silver and steel katanas, and later the arsenal of the School of the Chameleon Witchers, replacing their original swords before their extinction.

Status on the Western Coast

On the western coast, the Tuyotuki Islands remained unknown to Nilfgaard until the mid-13th century After the Resurrection, when contact with them was established during the Nilfgaardian attempt to conquer the Sundalaic Islands.

The Northern Kingdoms, meanwhile, would not learn of the islands until the end of that century, when the Temerian explorer Fabio Sachs returned from his expedition to the Far East and brought back accounts of the territory.

To the Nordlings, the Tuyotuki Islands came to be regarded as a land even stranger and more unfamiliar than Zerrikania, itself already heavily exoticized within the Northern imagination.

Despite this growing awareness, sustained and extensive interactions between Tuyotukians and Nordlings would not develop until approximately the 15th and 16th centuries After the Resurrection, when the expansion of their respective colonial possessions eventually brought both peoples into direct and increasingly frequent contact.

Status in the Far South

Thanks to Nilfgaard, knowledge of the existence of the Tuyotuki Islands eventually reached the Zangvebarians, who subsequently began visiting the archipelago on rare occasions for the purpose of trade.

For a Zangvebarian, traveling to the Tuyotuki Islands was roughly equivalent to what a journey to Zerrikania represented for a Nordling: a voyage to a distant and unfamiliar land, but one sufficiently known and connected to established trade networks to remain within the realm of feasible travel.

Status in the Rest of the Old Continent

As a consequence of the expansion of the First Tuyotukian Empire, knowledge of the Tuyotukians eventually reached both the Zerrikanians and the Melukkans, who would also occasionally travel to the islands for the purpose of trade.

Despite these long-distance contacts, however, the overwhelming majority of the foreign population present in the Tuyotuki Islands consisted of Biathinians, originating from the various countries of Bia Thin, alongside peoples from other neighboring regions, particularly inhabitants of the different states of the Asatta Peninsula.

Government

The government of the Tuyotuki Islands is a semi-absolute monarchy, representing a transitional stage between a feudal monarchy and an absolute monarchy, ruled by an emperor or empress, depending on the historical period.

Tuyotukian society itself remains fundamentally feudal. However, the emperor or empress possesses sufficient authority to alter the established feudal order to a certain extent, owing to their status as a ruler possessing a divine right to rule.

This legitimacy derives from the imperial dynasty's supposed descent from Tsuyoi Tsuki no Otoko (強い月の男), the deity from whom the archipelago itself takes its name.

It is precisely this coexistence between a still-functioning feudal order and an unusually powerful divinely sanctioned monarch that makes the Tuyotukian system semi-absolute, rather than fully feudal or fully absolute.

During the First Tuyotuki Empire, the state functioned primarily as a

thalassocracy and attempted to transition toward a tellurocracy, although this transformation ultimately failed.

By the time of the Second Tuyotuki Empire, however, Tuyotuki had successfully developed into an empire in the more conventional sense of the term, exercising sustained control over extensive territories beyond its original maritime sphere.

Administrative Divisions

The Tuyotuki Archipelago is divided into several *ken*, or prefectures, with each prefecture corresponding to a single island.

Each *ken* is in turn divided into *dō*, or circuits, each encompassing several provinces. Below the provinces are the *shichō*, or subprefectures. Beneath these are the *to*, or metropolises, which administer the *fu*, or urban prefectures.

A *fu* encompasses the corresponding city together with all the towns, villages, and smaller settlements surrounding it. The fu represents the lowest level of the Tuyotukian administrative hierarchy, with no further formal subdivisions beneath it.

The basic hierarchy can therefore be summarized as: *Ken* → *Dō* → *Province* → *Shichō* → *To* → *Fu*.

Outside this structure, during its periods as an empire, Tuyotuki possessed territories administered as provinces and colonies, alongside a variety of dependent polities, including vassal states, buffer states, satellite states, and puppet states. Some of the latter remained within the Tuyotukian sphere of influence even after the collapse of the First Tuyotukian Empire.

Consequently, although Tuyotuki had *de facto* ceased to function as an empire, it continued to regard itself *de jure* as one, owing to the survival of these dependent states and the political relationships inherited from its former imperial structure.

Coat of Arms

The coat of arms of the Tuyotuki Islands is simple. It consists of a black field bearing a white full moon, whose rays illuminate the lower portion of the otherwise dark background.

The black represents the chaos of existence, while the moon symbolizes the

divine. Its rays represent both the enlightenment granted to Daruma and the guidance the Moon provided to the Tsukierabi in more than one sense, most notably during their arrival in the islands.

Culture

Age of Majority

The age of majority varies according to the group to which each person belongs within the social structure. The lower the group, the later legal adulthood is attained; conversely, the higher the group, the earlier it is attained.

Alchemy

Alchemy in the Tuyotuki Islands is relatively well developed, although it has never reached the level found in places such as Núchtetl or Zerrikania.

Much of this development can be traced back to the First Imperial Period, when the Tuyotukians absorbed considerable amounts of alchemical knowledge from the territories they conquered.

Unlike in many other cultures, however, Tuyotukian alchemy is not primarily focused on defense or medicine, but rather on terraforming.

The main islands of the archipelago possess tropical climates, where jungle vegetation can rapidly reclaim cleared or inhabited areas. Alchemical preparations and techniques are therefore employed to prevent the jungle from prematurely overtaking cultivated, urbanized, or otherwise modified land, allowing the Tuyotukians to maintain environments that would otherwise require constant physical intervention.

Architecture

The fundamental structure derives from the earliest architecture of Bia Thin, probably that of the Jade Empire. However, unlike the latter, Tuyotukian architecture is characterized by axial symmetry, monumentality, vivid colors, and hierarchical order, alongside a fluid integration with nature—not to honor it, but rather to avoid monsters or predators—minimalism, respect for the natural texture of wood, and adaptation to the tropical climate.

Example of T

tuyotukianarchitecture

Roofs have very steep slopes and are divided into multiple overlapping tiers. Materials include teak wood, stucco, glazed tiles, mirror mosaics, and shells. Buildings are constructed using *kigumi*, a type of nail-free joinery, due to the volcanic earthquakes that occasionally strike the islands. Interiors consist of mutable spaces, with sliding paper doors, or *shoji*, allowing the internal layout of a house to be changed within seconds and seamlessly connecting the interior with, for example, an outdoor garden. Buildings also follow a horizontal design, prioritizing width over height specifically to prevent major disasters during earthquakes, with structures spreading across the ground around immense enclosed courtyards.

Art

All forms of art can be found throughout the Tuyotuki Islands due to the abundance of materials available for artistic creation. However, the two most popular are sculpture and the performing arts, particularly theater.

Literature, so often associated with eastern lands through Western clichés, is not nearly as popular. Due to the value placed on it as a means of preserving information and the fact that few people are literate, it is largely reserved for a select few.

Something similar occurs with music. Due to the highly stratified nature of Tuyotukeian society, music is restricted to only a few sectors of society—or, at least, what these sectors consider to be "*true music*," rather than *zatsuon* (雑音), or irritating noise.

Calendar

They are a people who worship the moon. Therefore, their calendar is, unsurprisingly, lunar—both for religious reasons and because of its effectiveness.

Contraceptive Methods

Contraceptive methods exist in the Tuyotuki Islands and are essentially alchemical in nature, produced from combinations of animal organs and plants.

Their use, however, is restricted exclusively to the aristocracy, but not to royalty. Members of the Imperial Family are forbidden from using contraceptives, as

preventing the continuation of the imperial bloodline is regarded as an alteration of the established order. The aristocracy, by contrast, is permitted to use them because limiting the number of potential aristocratic descendants also means fewer possible long-term rivals to the Imperial Family, thereby helping to preserve the existing order.

Currency

In the Tuyotuki Islands, an oval-shaped gold coin known as the ryo is used. It is so dense that its local value is equivalent to several sacks of rice. Unlike other currencies around the globe, it has an obverse and reverse bearing two different faces: that of the ruler of the territory where the coin was issued on the obverse, and that of the reigning emperor or empress on the reverse.

Other Currencies

Beyond the ryo, however, each island uses what are known as kozeni (こぜに), a series of lower-denomination coins made from the rarest material found on each respective island. They are used for internal trade, while the ryo serves for inter-island and foreign trade.

Customs

It is impossible to speak of general Tuyotukian customs due to two main factors: the highly stratified nature of society, and the fact that each island, owing to its particular conditions, has developed customs of its own within the broader Tuyotukian cultural idiosyncrasy.

One of the few elements that can be considered common to everyone, across virtually every level of society, is etiquette. This is believed to have been inherited from the Jade Empire and subsequently intensified in the islands.

There are, quite literally, rules of etiquette for virtually everything. They are not limited to dining or courtly behavior, to give just two examples. They also govern far more mundane activities, such as entering a smithy to commission something, giving fish to a guild, going out to celebrate, or even going to the privy to relieve oneself.

This obsession with etiquette has reached such an extent that even the distant country of Zongguo—which prides itself on being the sole legitimate heir to the Jade Empire partly because of how orderly its society is—is regarded by the

Tuyotukians as excessively chaotic.

Daily Life

Daily life varies not only from island to island, but also according to caste, making it impossible to provide a single general description. The only broad pattern that can be highlighted is that the day begins with one caste, then gradually progresses through the others until all of them are active. This pattern persists throughout the day, creating a social rhythm that, in poetic terms, resembles the beating of a hammer. When night arrives, the process that marked the beginning of the day occurs in reverse.

Diet

"*It's not bad once you get used to it, of course. Although I'm still not particularly fond of eating dried seaweed.*"
—Gailmadert aep Blynwyrn, from his diary of 1265 After the Resurrection (230 After the Foundation according to the Nilfgaardian imperial calendar)

It is impossible to speak of a single Tuyotukian diet. Eating habits vary considerably between islands, between different regions of the same island, and according to social caste.

It is nevertheless possible to identify certain foods of particular cultural importance. The most important staple is not rice—rice only occupies such a position in several countries of Bia Thin—but sorghum.

Indeed, as a cultural curiosity, rice is traditionally regarded in the Tuyotuki Islands as the food of barbarians, while wheat bread is stereotypically associated with primitive peoples.

Domestic Animals

Cats and dogs are present in the Tuyotuki Islands, with the latter having been brought from somewhere else by the non-native Tuyotukans. Cats, meanwhile, had already existed on the islands for an unknown length of time before their domestication, in isolated branches such as the bay cat (Catopuma badia), the marbled cat (Pardofelis marmorata), the fishing cat (Prionailurus viverrinus), among others.

However, cats and dogs are not as popular—this does not mean that they are

absent, as they certainly exist—due to the presence of antherions such as nekomata and jinmenken. The latter have a particularly bad reputation for extorting people by either leaving their transformation into human form deliberately incomplete or revealing an extremely terrifying form they are capable of assuming—their defensive form. This canine-looking antherion should not be confused with lycanthropy, which is a form of therianthropy—that is, transformation from human to animal—and furthermore does not reach the terrifying appearance of the jinmenken.

As a result, the role normally occupied by cats and dogs in society is primarily fulfilled by birds, with cats and dogs being relegated to less common pets than elsewhere. Ravens are particularly prominent, with an enormous variety of domesticated breeds, followed by birds of prey, parrots such as the vulturine parrot, and owls. These birds are useful for surveillance, companionship—particularly in the case of ravens—and tracking, the latter primarily thanks to birds of prey as well as ravens.

Justice

The Tuyotukian justice system is retributive in nature, with death being the punishment for the most serious crimes.

However, its retributive character has a particular feature that the mage Istredd—an archaeologist, professor, and companion of Sachs on his expeditions following a certain incident in the North involving a black-haired sorceress and the subsequent death of said sorceress—described as traumatizing.

The purpose is not merely to repay an offense with punishment. Rather, as Istredd's description suggests, the system seeks to traumatize the offender by turning the nature of their own crime against them. The intention is to affect them so profoundly that, provided the offense is not severe enough to warrant death, they will not only refrain from committing the same crime again, but ideally become unwilling to commit any crime whatsoever due to the resulting trauma.

Language

The language of the islands is the Idaisa no gengo (偉大さの言語), literally, the *language of greatness*.

It originally had another name, but after the conquerors who would give rise to

modern Tuyotuki seized control of the territory, they renamed it, and the new name endured. Their intention was both to reflect what they regarded as the great achievement of the conquest itself and to "*demonstrate*" to the native peoples that their language was noble and beautiful, unlike the supposedly barbaric and ugly languages spoken by the natives.

Ironically, over the centuries, although the native languages eventually disappeared, they became heavily intertwined with Idaisa no gengo. While the latter retained its grammar, structure, and pronunciation, it absorbed a vast amount of vocabulary from those indigenous languages.

In addition to Idaisa no gengo, numerous creoles and pidgins are spoken in the ports, as are foreign languages, particularly those of the eastern coast.

The witchers of the School of the Dragon speak a creole of their own, derived from several linguistic sources but with a Zerrikanian substratum, which functions as a cant. Some non-humans retain languages of their own, such as the nekomata.

Several constructed languages are also used as cants. These should not be confused with the creole spoken by the Dragon witchers, which developed naturally, although the creation of some of these constructed cants was inspired by their example. The most notable case is that of the onna-musha.

Idaisa no gengo itself is divided into three principal dialects: High Idaisa no gengo, Intermediate Idaisa no gengo, and Low Idaisa no gengo. Their differences in mutual intelligibility relative to the High variety are approximately 10% and 20%, respectively; in other words, Intermediate Idaisa retains roughly 90% similarity with High Idaisa, while Low Idaisa retains around 80%.

Finally, thanks to the work carried out by Gailmadert aep Blynwyrn and his superiors during his adolescence, a small number of people in the islands are able to speak Nilfgaardian.

Marriage

All forms of marriage can be found throughout the Tuyotuki Islands, although they are limited according to each caste.

The main social distinction is, quite simply, that the lower one's position within the social hierarchy, the less possibility there is of obtaining a divorce—and conversely, the higher one's position, the greater that possibility becomes. This

is due to the disruption of the social order that divorce is considered to cause. In fact, among the intermediate castes, divorce does not exist as such. Instead, there is what in Western terms would roughly be described as "*taking a break*."

Magic

"*And here I was thinking sorceresses were the only ones with a nasty temper... although perhaps I was biased by certain... experiences*"
—Istredd of Aedd Gynvael, after witnessing a madōshi in action in Kojima

Magic in the Tuyotuki Islands is primarily the domain of the madōshi (魔導士), who study within their respective Yūki o Motarasu Ie. These institutions are open to both men and women, as magic itself does not discriminate between sexes.

The social system, however, does. Female madōshi receive less recognition and occupy positions of lesser authority within the social pyramid than their male counterparts, supposedly because women are considered too emotionally volatile. As a result, many eventually abandon the profession for other paths when their frustration with the system becomes too great.

Although madōshi roughly correspond to Western mages and resemble them in several respects, they are not the same and possess a number of important differences.

The first is specialization.

Western mages may specialize in one element before learning another substantially different one and, if exceptionally skilled, eventually develop mastery over all five. As a result, a mage commonly possesses particular expertise in two elements. Two notable examples in the North are the legendary Yennefer of Vengerberg, specialized in Air and Water magic, and the equally legendary Triss Merigold, associated with Fire and Air.

A madōshi, by contrast, specializes in a single element and subsequently develops mastery over its related para-elements. Although this restricts them to one elemental family, the existence of numerous para-elements and combinations between them gives a skilled madōshi access to a surprisingly broad variety of spells, potentially broader than that of an average western mage within their chosen magical domain.

The second major difference is their social role.

Unlike the mages of the Northern Kingdoms, madōshi possess little political

influence. Their principal institutional role is military, and even there they remain subordinate to higher-ranking members of the military hierarchy. In Nordling terminology, they might superficially be compared to battlemages, although the comparison remains imperfect.

The third difference concerns the way they draw power from Ley Lines.

Rather than extracting and accumulating magical energy through concentration before using it, madōshi employ what could be described as a controlled reaction. They allow themselves to be influenced by the ley line, permitting magical energy to flow naturally through their bodies rather than storing it beforehand.

This makes their magic highly dependent upon continued access to magical energy. Away from an extraction point, their available power is depleted relatively quickly unless they resort to drawing upon vital energy. In this respect, madōshi could roughly be described as the result of extensively developing a magical tradition occupying an intermediate position between a Source with no training and a newly trained Western mage.

The fourth and final major difference follows directly from this controlled-reaction method: madōshi cannot properly cast spells without physical objects capable of focusing the magical energy flowing through them.

Rather than relying primarily upon gestures like many other magic users, they employ objects known as channelers. A gong, for example, may serve as a channeler for Air magic or its para-element of Sound. Channelers therefore transform the magical energy passing through the madōshi into the required spell. In this respect, they somewhat resemble the western stereotype of a mage using a wand, although the underlying magical principle is different.

Each channeler allows the casting of particular spells belonging to a specific element or one of its para-elements. Combining several compatible channelers can increase the potency of those spells, while using two different channelers can produce combinations between an element and its para-element, or between different para-elements belonging to the same elemental family. One particularly common channeler is a staff topped with a sphere.

Outside the madōshi tradition are the majo (魔女), broadly equivalent to the witches of the Northern Kingdoms. They rely upon emotion in the casting of magic and generally exist outside mainstream Tuyotukian society. Many are

former female madōshi who became disillusioned with the social system and abandoned it.

The other major exception is, of course, the witchers of the School of the Dragon.

Mentality

"*Order separates us from animals and brings us closer to the divine*"
—Daruma's last words on his deathbed, as recorded in the Red Book

Order is the supreme value of Tuyotukian society. So much so that virtually any other value may be denied in its name. Consequently, chaos in its most destructive sense—as well as simple disorder and disorganization—is deeply repudiated.

This also includes ignorance, which is regarded as a form of chaos and must therefore be eradicated. This does not mean, however, that absolute knowledge is made available to everyone, as doing so would itself generate further chaos. Instead, each person is expected to possess the knowledge necessary for them to maintain order.

Following order comes an extreme consideration for the feelings of others, involving a profound fear of imposing upon or offending someone, as doing so may disrupt order and create chaos. This manifests in an effort to avoid public embarrassment, loss of dignity, or open confrontation, both for oneself and for others, as well as an expectation that people remain patient and calm, since public displays of anger or aggression are regarded as a loss of self-control—and therefore, once again, as a loss of order and a manifestation of chaos.

To this are added patience and strength during difficult times, as well as a steady drive to improve oneself every day so as to prevent chaos from prevailing, among other values, all ultimately pointing in the same direction established by order.

Although these principles are broadly similar throughout the Tuyotuki Islands, they possess slight variations depending on the island or even the particular region of an island being visited. For example, the concept of honor—so exaggerated in Western clichés—varies considerably between islands and according to the degree to which it is subordinated to order. The same applies to loyalty and even fidelity.

It should also be emphasized that the Tuyotukians are not opposed to change. In

their worldview, change is merely change so long as it does not alter the fundamental pillars of the existing order, but instead improves them in order to prevent chaos.

Prostitution

Prostitution exists in the Tuyotuki Islands through the oiran. However, access to their services is restricted to the highest castes and, more specifically, to members of the upper military establishment.

Consequently, the islands lack the concept of the brothel commonly found on the western coast. Prostitution does not operate as a broadly accessible commercial service, but rather as an activity confined to a narrow sector of Tuyotukan society.

The principal social function of the oiran is to provide high-ranking military personnel with a means of relieving stress. This is also why their services are classified as empty entertainment within Tuyotukian thought: although they may provide pleasure and psychological relief, they are not considered to produce anything intellectually or socially useful beyond that immediate function.

This contrasts with forms of entertainment considered potentially formative. A musical performance, for example, might inspire a military officer to conceive a new battlefield tactic and therefore produce something beyond the entertainment itself.

Religion

The Tuyotukians have an inverse parallel with the Nilfgaardians: the worship of a celestial body. In their case, rather than the Sun, they worship the Moon, under the name Tsuyoi tsuki no otoko (強い月の男), literally, the *Man of the Strong Moon*, within a diffused monotheistic religion, unlike that of the Nilfgaardians, which is fully monotheistic.

Originally, it should be noted, the religion was monotheistic. However, expansionism—first across the islands and later into further territories—and, consequently, the influence that conquered peoples exerted upon the Tuyotukians led them to adopt diffused monotheism for several reasons. One of these was to avoid losing those territories while simultaneously Tuyotukanizing them, until eventually diffused monotheism became something intrinsic to

Tuyotukian religion itself.

Society

Tuyotukian society is a pyramidal feudal society divided into castes. It does not differ greatly from societies in Melukka or even the North to certain extent.

Social Structure

What marks a notable difference from other places is that these castes are not divided solely by profession, but also by race—or at least by what the Tuyotukians perceive as one. The occupations a person may practice are limited by their race, as is how far they may move upward or downward within their respective section of the pyramid.

At the bottom are foreigners; above them are the remaining non-humans who have been more or less assimilated; above them are those of mixed non-human and human ancestry, followed by those with non-human ancestry but fully humans, then native Tuyotukians, those of mixed native and non-native Tuyotukian ancestry, those of native ancestry but non-native themselves, and finally, at the top, non-native Tuyotukians.

Exceptions exist in the case of members of the royal family with various mixed origins, as well as the witchers of the School of the Dragon, who stand outside the system due to their role and do not suffer the discrimination faced by other non-humans, as they are regarded as heroes by the common people.

Social Units

The social units of the Tuyotuki Islands are organized as follows. First is the pyramid itself. Within the pyramid are the castes that divide it. Within each caste are sub-pyramids, which are divided according to occupation. Within these occupations are clans, extended family groupings that may include relatives as distant as seventh cousins. Depending on their position within the pyramid and their respective sub-pyramids, these clans essentially act as pressure groups or guilds—at least in economic terms, as their role is more complex than that. Within the clans are families, which constitute the basic social unit.

Discrimination

Essentially, this discrimination is based on origin, limiting how far a person can

rise within the pyramid, as occupations within the Tuyotukian system are determined neither by ability nor by being born into a particular caste, but rather by one's origin within it. In the case of the Nordlings, although non-humans are regarded as second- or third-class citizens, they may still attain positions of power if they wish to do so. The most notable example is that of dwarven bankers; such a situation would not be viable in the Tuyotuki Islands.

However, this discrimination does not exist without reason—especially where foreigners are concerned—but rather because of the Wozou pirates. These are fleets-states of non-humans native to the Tuyotuki Islands who were expelled by the first non-native Tuyotukans when they arrived. They raid the islands from time to time and constitute one of the country's greatest existential threats. The system thus serves to prevent anyone with motives to destroy the Tuyotukian state from succeeding in doing so by attaining positions of power.

Education

Education is limited—both at the lower and upper ends—by the caste into which a person was born and, within that caste, by the section of the sub-pyramid to which their parents belonged, as these sub-pyramids are themselves divided according to occupation.

Universities and academies do not exist. The closest equivalents are the Yūki o Motarasu Ie (勇気をもたらす家), literally, *Houses That Bring Courage*. They essentially function as academies in that they are not as large as universities, and as universities in that they serve as repositories of knowledge. Unlike universities, however, their knowledge is not broad, but rather ultra-specialized around a particular occupation.

Each Yūki o Motarasu Ie is controlled by the most powerful clan within the corresponding occupation in the sub-pyramid of each caste.

Access to these institutions and their knowledge is, naturally, determined by the rank held by one's occupation within the sub-pyramid. In fact, each floor is accessible only to people belonging to an occupation ranked high enough within the pyramid.

The sole exception are the witchers of the School of the Dragon, who were allowed to preserve the educational structures imported from Zerrikania—and, indirectly, from the extinct Order of Witchers of the North, which gave rise to the predecessors of the Dragons, the Manticores.

Life Expectancy

Due to environmental and dietary factors, life expectancy is around 60 years for the lower castes, 80 years for the middle castes, and 95 years for the upper castes. There is no overall average life expectancy of 80 years as found in the Northern Kingdoms.

Military

"*If you're going to meet His Excellency the Shogūn dressed like that and bowing in that manner, he'll have you executed after mistaking you for a river parasite.*"
—Chosokabe Shimazu Date Masako to Putnam Pitch, circa April 1284 After the Resurrection

The military organization of the Tuyotuki Islands varies considerably between islands—and even between different regions of the same island—as well as according to the particular military clan to which a force owes allegiance.

Consequently, there is no single organizational model that can accurately describe the entirety of the Tuyotukian military. Equipment, internal organization, traditions, doctrine and other characteristics may vary considerably between different military clans and territories.

Above the military clans stands the Emperor or Empress, who is regarded as the Supreme General of the Tuyotuki Islands. This position should not be confused with that of the Great General, or Shogūn, who stands immediately below the monarch within the military hierarchy. The Shogūn acts as the Emperor or Empress's substitute in military affairs whenever the sovereign is unable to exercise their role as Supreme General directly.

One of the few institutions shared throughout the various military traditions of the archipelago is compulsory military service for men. The precise nature and extent of this obligation, however, depends upon the caste into which an individual is born.

Nightlife

Nightlife exists and is highly varied, although it follows a predominantly religious pattern. This variety is, naturally, determined by the phase of the moon at any given time.

During the full moon, nightlife is characterized by overt religiosity, expressed through festivals and other similar activities. During the new moon, certain activities that are otherwise somewhat frowned upon are tolerated, and events such as public executions take place.

One case that illustrates this particularly well—documented thanks to Pitch after he was forced to disguise himself as one for a contract and later immortalized in writing by Fabio—is that of the geishas. They should not be confused with the Western cliché associating them with prostitution. Geishas are regarded as a form of empty entertainment, albeit one considered superior to the oiran, or courtesans—hence the importance of avoiding the aforementioned confusion—but empty nonetheless, unlike theater or music, which can have an educational purpose.

Social Phenomena

The Tuyotuki Islands share a dark parallel with the Northern Kingdoms: the phenomenon of non-human guerrillas—or rather, a paramilitary army on land and pirates at sea.

At sea, this takes the form of the wozous, non-human pirates who live in fleet-states and occasionally attack the islands. They originated from the non-humans who were driven out to sea by the Tuyotukians during their conquest of the islands. Their descendants continue their efforts to destroy the Tuyotukian state in the hope of one day reclaiming the homeland of their ancestors as mentioned earlier.

On land, the phenomenon can be seen in the Hyakki Yagyō (百鬼夜行), the *Night Parade of One Hundred Demons*. It is a paramilitary army, better organized than the Scoia'tael guerrillas of the North, composed of highly diverse non-humans who are supposedly assimilated but are, in reality, opposed to the social order imposed by humans. At night, disguised as monsters—in this regard, similarly to the Aen Fomuire in the Far South—they terrorize, plunder, and destroy territory in an attempt either to change the existing order, replace it with one in which humans suffer as they have and non-humans stand at the top, or destroy it entirely and restore the region to what it once was. Their aims vary depending on the leader at the time and their degree of belligerence.

In this sense, they act as a mixture of the Scoia'tael and the Wild Hunt, to put it in Nordling and Nilfgaardian terms. Their most popular leader was Hoseki, an Aen

Hagde elf who, before stepping down, was nicknamed Ōyuki-onna (大雪女), *the Great Lady of Snow*, by the people, among other, more terrifying epithets such as Onryō (怨霊).

Slavery

Slavery exists in the Tuyotuki Islands and is one of the most common punishments imposed for the abuse of another person, although the exact punishment varies according to the nature and severity of the offense. Rapists, for example, are subjected to a punishment intended to reproduce the trauma caused by their crime.

As in Melukka, slavery is temporary, and there is no regular foreign slave market through which enslaved individuals are bought and sold. The exception is when an individual is deemed to have become a persistent social burden whose continued presence disrupts the established order. In such cases, that person may be sold abroad.

Nilfgaard took advantage of this practice during the colonization of the Western Continent, acquiring numerous Tuyotukian slaves alongside enslaved Melukkans and Barsameni. Over the following centuries, these populations mixed with Nilfgaard's own enslaved peoples, eventually contributing to the emergence of several new ethnic groups.

Symbols

Many symbols are popular throughout the Tuyotuki Islands, but the most prominent is the Moon. It appears everywhere, from the coats of arms of clans and families to the shape of shields themselves, ship designs, and even jewelry—primarily necklaces.

Many people wear symbols depicting the Moon in its different phases, representing how good a devotee they are to the faith. The particular lunar phase displayed on a necklace indicates how many sins they have committed and have yet to atone for. A full moon represents a perfect devotee, while a new moon represents either a terrible person, someone who has been excommunicated, or an atheist.

Weapons and Armor

"*I assure you, my friends—and I do not say this to boast—that a sword from Viroledo is a thousand times better than those katanas of yours*"
—Gailmadert aep Blynwyrn, captain of The Glutton, during a conversation with local officials inspecting his cargo at the port of Meisui-shi, Teien

Tuyotukian weapons and armor are highly distinctive. So much so that, due to the historical influence of the islands, they have shaped the design of weapons and armor found elsewhere along the eastern coast, the most notable example being the jikdo, the characteristic sword of Asatta.

However, precisely because of that same historical importance, foreign influences have also had a considerable impact on Tuyotukian arms and armor, despite their retaining what could be described as a foundational or traditional structure.

As a result, not only does each historical period possess its own particular military characteristics, but even individual decades within those periods can display significant differences.

For example, during the 13th century, the Nilfgaardians introduced chainmail to the country, something that revolutionized warfare once it was adapted by the Tuyotukians.

Weapon and Laws

"*Right, today is the weekend, which means that for my meeting with the governor of Meisui-shi I may only carry a small dark-red knife.*"
—Gailmadert aep Blynwyrn, 1269 After the Resurrection

The possession and carrying of weapons in the Tuyotuki Islands follows a graduated system based primarily on caste.

The higher an individual stands within the caste hierarchy, the greater the variety of weapons they are permitted to possess and carry, as well as the number of social contexts in which carrying them is considered legal. Conversely, the lower an individual stands within the hierarchy, the fewer circumstances exist in which they may legally carry a weapon and the greater the number of weapon types from which they are restricted.

Consequently, Tuyotukian weapon law cannot generally be reduced to a simple distinction between legal and prohibited weapons. The legality of carrying a particular weapon depends upon the social position of its bearer and the

circumstances in which it is being carried.

The principal exception to this system are the witchers of the School of the Dragon. Due to the requirements of their occupation, Dragon witchers are exempt from most restrictions governing the possession and carrying of weapons.

Taboos

"*Fabio, I love you dearly, I really do. But stop asking. Even I don't know what happened with Masako. 'Cultural misunderstandings,' I suppose. Are you actually writing this down? Put the quill away, would you? And by the way, when did Gailmadert say we'd reach Sabana for a stop?*"
—Words of Putnam Pitch recorded in Chronicles of the Far East: The Discarded Material, edited by Fabio's son, Putnam Sachs, and published in 1316, ten years after his father's death while attempting to discover whether anything existed beyond the Great Sea

Surprisingly, Tuyotukian society has relatively few taboos. In fact, it possesses essentially only one, which could be described as a macro-taboo: failing to observe the specific rules of etiquette appropriate to any given situation.

Writing System

The Tuyotuki Islands use the same writing system as Bia Thin: the imperial writing system of the Giok Dì Gok, or Jade Empire (玉帝國), the state that unified Bia Thin in the distant past. This is one of the reasons why the non-native Tuyotukans are believed to have originated there as exiles, and why, during the First Empire, they were so determined to conquer the region, as an act of revenge for having been expelled.

Women's Rights and Sexual Minorities

This varies according to each person's social position within the pyramid. At its lowest levels, there is complete equality in terms of women's rights and sexual minorities, as people are not as concerned with such matters, given that there are more important issues to worry about. From there, sexism increases along a gradient, reaching its highest point at the very top of the pyramid, among royalty, although there have occasionally been empresses.

Justification of Sexism

Within the Tuyotukian worldview, sexism across many social strata is justified through religion. According to their beliefs, because women experience menstruation and it roughly coincides with the lunar cycle, this means that they were cursed by god, with the blood, pain, and other effects of menstruation being regarded as their punishment.

iangeisha

Only when women reach menopause and menstruation ceases are they considered to have purified themselves. From that point onward, they are treated as equals in those social strata where sexism had previously been particularly pronounced. Indeed, every empress who has ruled in her own right—as opposed to serving as an imperial consort—has ascended to the throne after the age of fifty for precisely this reason.

Fabio recorded one illustrative incident in which, while in a city, Pitch and Łukasz were offered money to lift what was believed to be a curse affecting a twelve-year-old girl from a high-ranking family. The witchers eventually discovered that she had simply begun menstruating and refused the payment.

Economy

The economy of the Tuyotuki Islands cannot be broadly defined, since, although it follows a predominantly agrarian trend, each island specializes in very different activities. This diversity is precisely one of the reasons why the Tuyotuki were able to become a major power and achieve such dominance, as the archipelago possessed the wide variety of resources necessary to sustain it.

Nevertheless, the general nature of its economy can be inferred from what the islands export abroad and what they import.

Their main exports include papyrus, elaborate ceramics, cosmetic products, long-lasting prepared foods, and minerals. Their imports, meanwhile, include fabrics, metals not found on the islands, seeds, written knowledge, and livestock capable of withstanding the local climate, the latter being sought in order to further improve the population's diet.

Examples of Tuyotukian Names

Tuyotukian names essentially follow three major patterns depending on the region of the caste pyramid into which a person was born. However, all of them follow the general structure of surname + given name.

Members of the upper castes have three surnames followed by a given name. In this case, the surnames are those of the person's great-grandfather/mother, grandfather/mother, and father/mother.

Members of the middle castes have two surnames followed by a given name. The first is a lineage surname, while the second is a surname indicating occupation.

Members of the lower castes have one surname followed by a given name. In this case, it is a lineage surname.

Yōkai

For more information on the monsters of the eastern coast, including the yōkai, you can explore the articles from the different volumes of the Ikimono Kōdekkusu, or Codex of Creatures

Yōkai (妖怪), literally specter, spirit, or demon, is the term used by the humans of the islands to refer to the monsters that arrived on the islands through the Conjunctions. Unfortunately, however, the term is also applied to non-humans who oppose them.

Notable Non-Human Species

For a complete list of known non-human species inhabiting the Tuyotuki Islands, see Category: Non-Humans of the Tuyotuki Islands.

"*I don't know what's uglier—you or the food Lambert used to cook at Kaer Morhen*"
—Łukasz "The Lion of Temeria," shortly before facing a norowaretachi during the Tuyotukian Civil War

Humanoids

- Aen Hagde: The *People of the Terraces*, the *Orang Bunian* or *eastern elves*. They are biologically similar to the other elven populations found

throughout the world. Their historical presence in the islands dates back to the Age of Migration, following the brief earlier presence of their maritime relatives, the Aen Taoide.

- Henshinsha (変身者): Literally *person who transforms*. The local branch of the dopplers also encountered on the western coast. Despite their long geographical separation, the Henshinsha possess no known biological differences substantial enough to justify their classification as a distinct subspecies.
- Imori (守宮): A local subspecies of the vran, or lizardmen, with an appearance vaguely reminiscent of salamanders or geckos. The imori once possessed a considerably more developed civilization and played an important role in the ancient history of the archipelago.
- Kodama: Pale, exclusively male humanoids possessing some form of biological relationship with nymphs. Their precise relationship remains unclear.
- Oni: An ogroid species closely related to the ogres encountered on the western coast. Oni differ primarily through their greater sapience, lack of body hair, and distinctive tusks. Unlike the protruding teeth of western ogres, these elongated, elephant-like structures emerge from the head in a manner resembling horns.
- Ōku: Often described as the Tuyotukian equivalent of western orcs, although this comparison is strictly cultural and behavioral rather than biological. The ōku are not orcs. Fabio Sachs made the comparison primarily on the basis of observations provided by the two western witchers accompanying his expedition, excluding their eastern allies from the School of the Dragon. Ōku evolved naturally from a porcine ancestor, whereas orcs are artificially created beings of post-elven origin.
- Norowaretachi: Literally *cursed blood*. An umbrella term applied to the unfortunate offspring produced when a half-oni—of either human or elven ancestry—reproduces with another biologically compatible ogroid. Numerous varieties of norowaretachi consequently exist. Those capable of successfully integrating into Tuyotukian society are particularly associated with sumo wrestling, where some become celebrated stars comparable in cultural prominence to gladiators within Nilfgaard.
- Tengu: Sapient avian humanoids descended naturally from corvid ancestors. Their civilization predates the First Conjunction of the Spheres and played a major role in the ancient history of Tuyotuki, most notably

during the War of the Heavens against the tatsu.
- Samebito: Aquatic humanoids believed to descend from ancient shark-like ancestors. They primarily inhabit the Tuyotukian Sea and represent one of the oldest surviving evolutionary lineages associated with the archipelago.

Non-humanoids

"*Never in my life did I think that, in the middle of a civil war, I would have to act as mediator in an attempt to resolve an ancestral dispute between two different kinds of cats. It easily makes the top ten most surreal things to have happened during my career as a witcher.*"
—Putnam Pitch, during an interview with Fabio Sachs on their journey home

- Akashita: A sapient creature commonly described as resembling an enormous hybrid between a lemur and a bear, despite apparently being related to neither. Its fur resembles dark storm clouds in color, shape and extraordinary fluffiness. An adult Akashita may reach a size comparable to three bears stacked on top of one another. Perhaps its most distinctive anatomical feature is its extremely long external red tongue, which functions as the creature's principal manipulative appendage and effectively serves the role that a hand would in a humanoid.
- Bakeneko: A sapient relative of the nekomata believed to have emerged sometime after the First Conjunction of the Spheres as a consequence of extreme evolutionary pressures. Unlike the nekomata, however, the bakeneko is not an antherion, having lost the capacity associated with such beings during its evolutionary development. Bakeneko are approximately the size of a red-faced macaque. Their most distinctive feature is their pair of extraordinarily developed tails, which have effectively become both large manipulative appendages and a whip-like structure. When using them as a whip, bakeneko hold both tails together. Likewise, when walking along the ground, they frequently wrap them around themselves to avoid stepping upon them. These behaviors produced the widespread misconception that bakeneko possess only a single tail. They are sometimes called *monkey cats*, particularly because they have been observed using their tails to move between trees within Tuyotukian jungles. Bakeneko themselves consider this term offensive. Their superficial resemblance and evolutionary relationship with nekomata have not produced solidarity between the two

peoples. Quite the opposite. Bakeneko and nekomata notoriously despise one another.

- Baku: A sapient creature descended from tapir-like ancestors and possessing extraordinarily developed psionic abilities. Rather than conventional limbs, baku extensively employ these abilities both to manipulate their environment and to communicate with other beings. They are particularly notorious for feeding upon the life energy of dreaming creatures, manipulating their victims while they sleep. Western scholars have occasionally compared them with incubi, succubi and related creatures. The comparison is nevertheless distant and functional: baku are neither biologically related to such beings nor do they behave in the same manner.
- Chōchin'obake: A sapient, largely subterranean species related to moles. Their bodies bear a striking resemblance to the chōchin lamps traditionally used throughout the islands. It remains uncertain whether this resemblance is coincidental or whether the creatures themselves influenced the historical design of the lamps. Chōchin'obake possess a biological language based primarily upon bioluminescence, communicating underground by producing different colors and patterns of light.
- Kitsune: Fox-shaped antherions and a local subspecies of the aguara found on the western coast. Kitsune possess particularly sophisticated illusion abilities, generally considered more powerful than those exhibited by their distant western relatives.
- Jinmenken: Dog-shaped antherions.
- Jorōgumo: Spider-shaped antherions.
- Mujina: Badger-shaped antherions.
- Nekomata: Cat-shaped antherions. One of the oldest known antherion lineages and descendants of the cats whose absorption of magical energy eventually contributed to their development of sapience. They maintain notoriously hostile relations with their relatives, the bakeneko.
- Tatsu: An eastern dragon lineage descendants of the golden dragons whose evolutionary development occurred in the Tuyotuki Islands after their ancestors became geographically isolated there. Like several other non-humanoid sapient beings, including the nekomata, tatsu possess the ability to change form. Unlike most antherions, however, tatsu generally prefer not to do so.

Notable Locations

For the complete list of known Tuyotuki Islands locations, see Category: Tuyotuki Islands locations

"*Ah, yes. The Golden Bridge. Or, as I will always remember it, Łukasz and Putnam—especially Putnam—doing something monumentally stupid by taking on around twenty members of the Hyakki Yagyō because of their hero complexes. Unfortunately, in this work I have to maintain a degree of seriousness, so I cannot start rambling about my dear best friend—disastrous in many respects, most notably in romantic relationships—and his madness, nor about good old Łukasz, who also became someone very close to me*"
—Fabio Sachs, Chronicles of the Far East, Volume X, Chapter XII, page 115.

Bridges

- Golden Bridge: Located in Sōtenkyō. Crossing it leads to the Usu volcano and the subsequent ascent to its summit.

Cities

- Meisui-shi (明水市): Literally, *City of Clear and Transparent Water*. Located on Teien, it is the economic capital of the country.

Inns

- The Spring Bird: Located in Kamori.

Lakes

- Kamo (鴨): Literally, *duck*. A lake named for resembling the shape of a duck's bill when viewed from above and, ironically, for being full of ducks—more specifically, several varieties of whistling ducks. Located in Kojima.

Landforms

- Ashi no Chi (葦の地): Literally, *Land of Reeds*. Located in Qajashi.

Mountains

- Horai (蓬莱): A mountain located on Tawalisi.
- Kaijinzan, or the Mountain of Ashes: Located in Sōtenkyō.

Palaces

- Shōten no Miya (昇天の宮), or the Palace of Spiritual Ascension: The place where Daruma died and supposedly ascended beyond the heavens.

Valleys

- Ogawa Shizu (小川静): Literally, *quiet stream*. A valley located in northern Teien.

Volcanoes

- Usu: Located in Sōtenkyō.

Notable People

For the complete list of known Tuyotukians, see Category: Tuyotukians

"*When the Ōyuki-onna reveals her face to you, run*"
—Popular saying from Kami

- **Aiko** (愛子): A feline antherion—an animal capable of transforming into a human—more specifically a nekomata (猫また), famous for having, in her feline form, an intensely judgmental stare, only to turn out to be an excellent being who ultimately helped Sachs's expedition survive part of the year in the region. She had apparently grown somewhat fond of the expedition for reasons unknown.
- **Akuma Baemu** (悪魔バエム): Baem "The Demon," an exiled witcher of the School of the Dragon, known in history for being the first Tuyotukian to set foot on the western coast after being assigned as the protector of the diplomat Donengar Akehi in order to earn the revocation of his exile. This became possible following contact between the Tuyotuki Islands and Nilfgaard on the island of Mekan, in the Sea of Hourglass in the Far South, in

1257. However, due to his personality and the fact that he was deaf and mute, no one ever learned of his true origins, and he was instead mistaken for a Haaki. Baem would join the School of the Viper that same year—the very year in which the School fell to the Usurper and his army. He would later briefly become a member of the Kingslayers led by Letho of Gulet. His set of steel and silver swords, crafted in the Asattan style and known as the Nine-Tailed Vixen Set, would eventually be offered to Emperor Emhyr var Emreis as a gesture of goodwill following the overthrow of the Usurper. Years later, they would begin a journey across the Old Continent, passing—according to unreliable sources—through the hands of a black-haired sorceress and a white-haired witcher, only to eventually return to the eastern coast and, according to reliable sources, end up in the hands of Putnam Pitch, who would use them during the final stage of Fabio Sachs's expedition.

- **Donengā Akehi** (土燃雅 明陽): Better known as *Donengar Akehi* or *Donengar Akehi aep Dúnen*. A Tuyotukan diplomat and former shinobi who took part in the earliest formal encounters—including the very first—between the Nilfgaardian Empire and the Tuyotuki Islands. Through these encounters, he became fascinated with Nilfgaardian culture, eventually leading him to become a naturalized Nilfgaardian citizen. In fact, he remains the only Tuyotukian known to have done so. A couple of years later, Stefan Skellen, who at the time was stationed in Mekan as an imperial coroner, noticed several shuriken hanging in Akehi's office. They caught his attention enough for him to ask about them and, after learning that they were throwing weapons, asked Akehi whether he could borrow them with the intention of introducing them into the Imperial Secret Service. Akehi agreed. After the weapons were reverse-engineered, they eventually gave rise to the weapon later known as the orion.
- **Hoseki** (宝石): An Aen Hagde elf native to the islands and the last leader of the Hyakki Yagyō (百鬼夜行) to achieve any significant prominence.
- **Ka'po'tō**: The last native king of both Teien and the islands as a whole, with the other native kings having fallen before him. His failed attempt to exterminate the invaders through a massive fire, supposedly named by him the *Fertilization of the Garden*, symbolized the end of the old Tuyotuki and the beginning of the Tuyotuki that exists today.
- **Shinryū** (神龍): Also known as Shenlong in many parts of Bia Thin. One of the first tatsu, or eastern dragons, which evolved from the now nearly

extinct golden dragons. Worshiped for a time both in Bia Thin and throughout the islands, he eventually grew tired of such worship and fell into a long slumber within the Usu volcano. He would only be awakened by Hoseki, who sought to have him unleash a natural catastrophe that would wipe humans from the map. At the same time, this was witnessed by the alliance between Sachs's expedition and the witchers of the School of the Dragon, who had been tracking Hoseki. Shinryū rejected her request, citing humanity's potential for both good and evil after reading the mind of one of the expedition's members, Pitch—although technically post-human due to his nature as a witcher. Afterwards, Shinryū flew away to an unknown location, leaving Hoseki's request unfulfilled.

- **Chosokabe Shimazu Date Masako** (長宗我部 島津 伊達 政子): An onna-musha, a member of the female guard of the imperial family. This guard exists precisely because of the sexism prevalent among the upper classes, as women are easier to conceal and therefore allow the imperial family to better prevent regicide attempts. During a period in which Sachs's expedition became widely scattered, to the point that some of its members were left traveling alone, Masako spent some time traveling alongside Pitch and his unexpected companion, Aiko. According to local rumors, Masako and Pitch may have had a romantic relationship, followed sometime later by another between Masako and Łukasz after the latter remained in the country. However, neither witcher ever responded to confirm or deny these allegations, and therefore the truth remains unknown.
- **Kumawakamaru** (熊若丸): A member of a shinobi clan with close ties to the Emperor and one of the main instigators of the civil war of the late 13th century, thanks to his charisma and talent for deception. The conflict began following the execution of Kumawakamaru's father, who had served as the Emperor's trusted right-hand man. Allegations of corruption had led the Emperor to issue the fatal order.

Notable Clans

For a complete list of all known clans of the Tuyotuki Islands, see Category: Tuyotukian Clans

- **Sanzu Clan** (三途): Literally, the *Clan of the Three Roads*, named after their occupation as merchants and, quite literally, their location at the crossroads of three roads. One of several clans that sought to place an emperor from

their own ranks on the throne during the civil war of the late 13th century.

Influential Foreigners

For the complete list of notable foreigners in the Tuyotuki Islands, see Category: Foreigners in the Tuyotuki Islands

"*This is between you and me, witcher. I'm sorry, but I can't let you go any further if this conflict gives me a chance to save my husband*"
—Tanla, a member of the Küzebka clan of the Cuchaq Horde who ended up in the Tuyotuki Islands during the civil war of the late 13th century

- **Fābīō**: Fabio Sachs, a Temerian explorer who, together with his team, arrived on the islands in December 1283 and remained there until December 1284. They became embroiled in the civil war that followed the emperor's death after being used as scapegoats and consequently accused of murdering him, as they were the only survivors of the massacre carried out by then-unknown forces at the site where the monarch died. With all ports closed to travel abroad due to the conflict—though inter-island travel remained possible—they were unable to leave the country.
- **Girugameshu** (ギルガメシュ): Gilgamesh, a witcher of the School of the Manticore who founded the School of the Dragon.
- **Futari no Tamashii** (ふたりの魂): Literally, *the souls of two people* or *two souls*. The name given by the locals to Putnam Pitch, a witcher of the School of the Griffin and Sachs's companion on the expedition, both because they found his name unpronounceable and because his heterochromatic feline eyes—one blue and one green—led to the more superstitious locals to believe that he literally possessed the souls of two people.
- **Tanla**: A 2.30-meter-tall warrior from the steppes of Kilan-Tal in the central parts of the Old Continent—more specifically, from the Küzebka clan of the Cuchaq Horde—who ended up in the Tuyotuki Islands in the late 13th century while attempting to save her husband from a neurodegenerative disease. This brought her into conflict with Sachs's expedition during the civil war. She was killed by Pitch at Shōten no Miya (昇天の宮), or the *Palace of Spiritual Ascension*, in Kami.
- **Umi no Raion** (海のライオン): Łukasz "The Lion of Temeria," one of the last active members of the School of the Wolf following its extinction. He

eventually traveled to Zerrikania and lived there until Fabio and his team passed through and recruited him, making him the second witcher to join the expedition. Unlike the others, he did not depart for the western coast in December 1284, instead remaining in the Tuyotuki Islands after joining the School of the Dragon. His local name, literally *Sea Lion*, originated from a misunderstanding when he tried to explain his western-coast nickname to the locals. As they did not know what a lion was—having never seen one—they interpreted it as a sea lion instead.

- **Yasuke** (弥助): The first Zangvebarian merchant to visit the Tuyotuki Islands. Shipwrecked on their shores during a storm, he was rescued by a local lighthouse keeper who gave him this name. He subsequently suffered from retrograde amnesia for much of his life, which eventually led him to become a samurai. Indirectly, he also represented the Tuyotukians' first contact with someone with very dark skin, as native Tuyotukians only had varying degrees of olive skin.
- **Hi no Onna** (火の女): Literally, *Woman of Fire*. D'yaebl of Hengfors, a witcheress of the School of the Cat who joined the expedition after it brought about the fall of the city-state of Zerzura in eastern Barsa through a slave revolt. Like all members of the School of the Cat, she was a complicated individual who suffered from numerous mental health issues stemming both from the school's corrupted mutations and from the environment in which its witchers were trained and raised. She was Pitch's lover—for lack of a better term, as the nature of their relationship was, to say the least, extremely ambiguous, although it was clear that they were not merely friends. She died while saving Fabio Sachs and Putnam from an oni, a type of local ogroid. Years earlier, in the North, she had attempted to kill Fabio Sachs under orders from the Nilfgaardian Military Intelligence, only failing because Fabio was saved by Putnam at the time. Her Tuyotukian name came from both her unstable personality and her naturally red hair, which also featured a naturally blond lock, giving it the appearance of a flame.
- **Shinyuu** (親友): Literally, *very close friend*. Gailmadert aep Blynwyrn, the Nilfgaardian captain of The Glutton, a ship named for its considerable cargo capacity. Originally from Nilfgaard, Gailmadert had first been sent to the Tuyotuki Islands during the 1260s as a teenage missionary of the Great Sun. From the 1270s onward, however, he abandoned that role and eventually became the man he would later be known as. He was the first Nilfgaardian

chronicler to write about the country, although his accounts were somewhat superficial due to his remaining primarily within coastal cities. Out of a sense of solidarity with fellow westerners—and since Fabio Sachs and his companions had originally arrived aboard a ship from Ketu Rahu that did not belong to them—Gailmadert offered to take Sachs's expedition back to the western coast, and therefore home, once the civil war had ended and the ports were reopened.

Notes

- To play a The Witcher TTRPG campaign set in the Tuyotuki Islands, you can click the following link, which will take you to the relevant article on the Witcher RPG Wiki: Tuyotuki Islands (TTRPG).
    - It should be noted, however, that such campaigns—if played with characters from the western coast—could not take place in 1272, the default starting date of R. Talsorian's TTRPG. Instead, they would have to take place either earlier, during the period of Nilfgaardian contact; during Fabio Sachs's expedition; or afterwards.
- To learn how to play the homebrew Samurai class in The Witcher TTRPG, click here: Samurai (TTRPG).
- To learn how to play the homebrew Ronin class in The Witcher TTRPG, click here: Ronin (TTRPG).,
- For campaigns featuring characters from the western coast, a useful historical analogy is the arrival of Portugal and Spain in Japan—the former in 1543 and the latter in 1549.
    - Nilfgaard = Portugal
    - Fabio and his companions = Spain.

Image Credits

- Tuyotukian Onna-musha and geisha by Diego Peres
- Shenlong by Hataya *from The Witcher: Ronin*
- Tengu by Hataya *from The Witcher: Ronin*
- Eastern Dragon Icon by *Gwent: The Witcher Card Game* for the Chinese New Year by Cd Projekt Red

Trivia

- The islands originated as a response to CD Projekt Red for not daring to expand the world with new characters and locations through a less risky medium such as comics and manga, instead limiting themselves to continuing to overexploit Geralt, Ciri, and Yennefer through an AU set in a land resembling Japan. Thus, much of what was introduced in the manga has been salvaged here to demonstrate that there was no need for it.
- As a tribute to Neverwitcher, who is a greater fan of the work and took it upon himself to expand the lore of *The Witcher: Ronin*, much of what he created has been reused in one way or another. You can begin exploring Neverwitcher's expansion here: Teien.
- The main inspiration for the Tuyotuki Islands is the Empire of Japan[W] (1868–1947), which is rarely used in fantasy compared to Imperial China, mixed with Thailand[W] and the native peoples of Taiwan[W].
- Among its minor influences, notable examples include the historical fantasy version of Japan presented in the video game *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice*[W] and the television series *Blue Eye Samurai*[W], the latter particularly regarding discrimination.
- The islands are indirectly mentioned in the hard canon of *The Witcher*—that is, the books—when Stefan Skellen, a member of Nilfgaardian Military Intelligence, uses what he calls orions, which are nothing more than shuriken[W]. According to Stefan himself, he obtained them from a place *beyond the seas*, which is never specified.
- The administrative divisions of the Tuyotuki Islands are those of present-day Japan, with a slight alteration in their order.
- The language of the Tuyotuki Islands, although Japanese is used for most terms, would essentially be a more established evolution of Kyowa-go[W], more specifically the version of the pidgin that had Japanese as its base.
- The diffuse monotheism of the Tuyotukian religion is inspired by Christianity in Japan[W] and Christo-Paganism[W], with elements drawn from Japanese new religious movements[W]. This was done to avoid simply copying Shinto and Buddhism, which are already heavily overused in fiction.
- Tawalisi[W] and Tawarisi are references to the Asian kingdom described in the travels of Ibn Battuta.

- Tsukishima[W] is a reference to the real-world location of the same name.
- Kojima[W] is a reference to Hideo Kojima, the video game director, particularly in regard to it being the place where the strangest things tend to happen.
- Some of the islands were salvaged from the version of the article prior to its rework, as there is no need to reinvent the wheel where it is unnecessary.
- Daruma[W] is a reference to the founder and first patriarch of Zen.
- *Ashi no Chi* (葦の地) shares its name with the land from which the Samurai class originates in the video game *Elden Ring*. In this case, however, it does not refer to a country, but rather to a geographical feature.
- Kaijinzan, The Spring Bird, and the Golden Bridge are locations from *The Witcher: Ronin*, albeit adapted. In that sense, since the manga is an AU, they could be seen as their "*canon*" counterparts.
- Yasuke[W] is a reference to the historical samurai.
- The architecture section is literally a combination of traditional Chinese, Japanese, and Thai architecture.
- The demographics are primarily inspired by two sources. The first is Manchukuo[W], the puppet state in East Asia; the second is Shimotsuki Village from *One Piece*, as Netflix's live-action adaptation presented a form of non-diegetic ethnic diversity that was not reflected in how the village itself was constructed or in some of its inhabitants. There should have been several highly mixed people living there, even while the village retained its samurai traditions.
- Tanla is a reference to the Armored Warrior from the video game *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice*.
- Ka'po'tō is a reference to the Ka Po' Tun race from Akavir in The Elder Scrolls video game series.
- If the arrival of the Nordlings on the western coast can be seen as analogous to the arrival of Europeans among indigenous peoples, the arrival of the non-native Tuyotukans in the Tuyotuki Islands can be seen as analogous to the Japanese occupation of the Philippines[W]. However, a proper Witcherverse counterpart to the Philippines already exists as an expansion on this Wiki: Anlúmapal, or the *Land of Palms Trees*.
- Horai is a reference to the mountain of the same name found across several Asian mythological traditions, popularly known as Penglai Shan[W].
- Kumawakamaru[W] is a reference to the historical figure of the same name,

although given a darker twist.
- The Mentality section is essentially a combination of Thai and Japanese social values, with the additional emphasis on order as the central principle around which these values are organized.
- Despite what its name might suggest, the Red Book is not primarily a reference to Mao Zedong or his Little Red Book, but rather to the Japanese Communist Party[W].
- The name Samwî-Sawxí O'xcho'y'a Yaxku Zåąâ du'Lømī follows the same general naming structure used by citizens of the Culture in Iain M. Banks' The Culture series[W] of science-fiction novels.
    - The individual components of the name, however, were inspired by sounds that could plausibly and naturally be produced by a raven, combined with a deliberate attempt to make the resulting name feel genuinely alien rather than human.
- The coat of arms of the Tuyotuki Islands is an intentional and obvious visual counterpoint to Japan's Rising Sun Flag[W]. Rather than a rising sun projecting its rays outward, Tuyotuki uses a white full moon illuminating the darkness below, fitting the lunar symbolism and religious worldview of the islands.
- Beyond the intention of avoiding the presence of essentially identical mages in every region of the world, developing culturally distinct classes within the same underlying magic system, and making each magical tradition feel unique, the principal inspiration behind the madōshi is Frieren, protagonist of *Frieren: Beyond Journey's End*[W] (Sōsō no Frieren).
    - The characteristic staff used by many madōshi is partly inspired by Frieren's own staff. At the same time, it serves as a broader homage to the vast number of Japanese fantasy works that have themselves drawn heavily from European medieval fantasy.
- An approximate example that helps illustrate the concept of the extraction points used by madōshi, although the process itself is not identical, can be found in *The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt*. During the events at Freya's Garden, Yennefer drains the garden of its life energy—likely located upon or strongly influenced by an Earth Ley Line, considering its extraordinary abundance of plant life—and transmutes that energy into Chasm, which she subsequently uses to perform necromancy. The process provides a useful point of

comparison for understanding how a madōshi relies upon locations from which sufficient magical energy can be drawn, although the actual method employed by the two magical traditions is different.

- The prevalence of light-colored eyes among the peoples of the Tuyotuki Islands is a reference to the inhabitants of Yi Ti from A Song of Ice and Fire, whose men are described as bright-eyed. Rather than reproducing the reference literally, the trait was expanded into a recurring phenotypic characteristic shared by several Tuyotukian ethnic groups, with different populations tending toward different shades and levels of pigmentation.
- The concept of monarchical communism used to describe some societies of the Second Great Peace is partly inspired by Cheondoism[W], a Korean religion that emerged during the 19th century and later developed currents with socialist characteristics and the aspiration of establishing a form of paradise on Earth. It is not a reference to Juche[W] ideology. In the Tuyotukian adaptation of the concept, the apparent contradiction between communism and monarchy derives from treating the monarch in a role structurally comparable to that occupied by the divine within the religious inspiration: communal organization exists beneath a supreme figure who stands at the head of the social order.
- Daruma, in addition to being a reference to Bodhidharma, traditionally regarded as the founder of Zen Buddhism in China, was also partly inspired by Hong Xiuquan[W], leader of the Taiping Rebellion[W]. Hong's influence can particularly be seen in Daruma's transformation from a religious figure claiming divine revelation into the leader of a radicalized religious movement with military and political ambitions, ultimately producing an entirely new political order.
- The mā*qāllī are a reference to the Demons of Kamal, one of the mysterious peoples of Akavir in The Elder Scrolls.
- The mo-tang are a reference to the Tang Mo, the so-called Monkey People of Akavir.
- The chi,ts'e-a are a reference to the Tsaesci, another of the major peoples traditionally associated with Akavir.
- The Ōku are inspired by several different sources. One is the depiction and reinterpretation of orcs within Japanese-produced medieval fantasy, although the Ōku themselves are explicitly not orcs within the setting. Another influence comes from the Brindled Men of Sothoryos in A Song of Ice and Fire, particularly as inspiration for the idea of a distinct humanlike

population whose physical characteristics encourage outsiders to make simplistic or misleading comparisons with other peoples. Their porcine ancestry and appearance additionally contain a reference to Porco Rosso, the protagonist of Porco Rosso[W].

- The norowaretachi, meanwhile, contain a reference to Juzou the Drunkard, the enormous sake-drinking warrior encountered in Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice.
- The Witcherverse adaptation of the Akashita, originally derived from the creature of the same name in Japanese mythology, was partly inspired by the Titans from C. M. Kösemen's speculative-evolution and science-fiction book *All Tomorrows*[W].
- Łukasz's storyline serves as a "canon adaptation" of the general premise behind The Witcher: Ronin. Rather than placing Geralt in an alternate universe inspired by feudal Japan, the storyline adapts the concept to the established setting through Łukasz's journey to the Tuyotuki Islands and his eventual integration into the School of the Dragon.
- Aiko's appearance as a fluffy orange cat was directly inspired by a real cat encountered by the main author of this article in Istanbul, Turkey.
- Although the article uses various Japanese writing systems when rendering the names of certain Tuyotukian concepts, these scripts do not exist as such within the setting and are used merely as a convention for the reader. In-universe, the Tuyotukian writing system would instead resemble Kana Basic, an alternative method of writing Japanese designed as an attempted middle ground between rōmaji and katakana. Kana Basic was originally created by Safebox for a game project that was later abandoned. The system exists in two different styles: the "true" Kana Basic form and an easy-reading variant. In the true form, each glyph is constructed by taking the consonant and its accompanying vowel, splitting the two characters vertically, and combining their respective halves into a single glyph. The easy-reading form follows the same underlying principle, but instead places the consonant and vowel components side by side within the same glyph, making the resulting text considerably easier to read. Thus, the Japanese characters appearing throughout the article should be understood as representations of Tuyotukian terminology for the benefit of the reader rather than their actual in-universe written forms.

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